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Portrait of Anna Miller.

POEMS

BY

SARAH HELEN WHITMAN.



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1879.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Nicholas Powers of three generations in Rhode Island traced their descent from Nicholas le Poer, whose castle of Don Isle was destroyed by Cromwell. The heroic defense of this castle by the baroness of Don Isle is the subject of a poem in the present volume. Sarah Helen Power, daughter of the last Nicholas Power, was born in Providence, Rhode Island, January 19, 1803, and died June 27, 1878. Marrying John W. Whitman, a lawyer of Boston, in 1828, she was left a widow by his death in 1833. Betrothed to Edgar Poe, in 1848, a few months before his death, the engagement was broken, on the eve of marriage, by the interference of friends. The early life of the poet was shadowed by the long absence of her father, and her later years were almost wholly devoted to a sister, left her in sacred charge by her mother. The poem, "In Memoriam," is the requiem of this sister. This poem, Mrs. Whitman's last, has all the intellectual vigor of youth, though written

at the age of seventy-five. The freshness of her spirit and the charm of her presence were not lost in the vicissitudes of a life of strange and romantic experience. No one ever associated with her the idea of age. She is represented as lying beautiful as a bride in death, her brown hair scarcely touched with gray.

The engraving in this book, from Thompson's picture, shows her in the most brilliant period of her life at thirty-five. The likeness is good after the lapse of forty years.

Mrs. Whitman's poems, to an unusual degree, illustrate the author's life. By her direction, the poems relating to Edgar Poe in this volume have been grouped together, though not placed under a separate head. To this group belong "Remembered Music," "Our Island of Dreams," "The last Flowers," "Song," "Withered Flowers," "The Phantom Voice," "Arcturus in October," "Resurgemus," the six "Sonnets To —," "Arcturus in April," and also "The Portrait," in the latter part of the volume.

In 1860 Mrs. Whitman published the little book, "Edgar Poe and his Critics," of which Curtis wrote, in "Harper's Weekly :" "In reading the exquisitely tender, subtle, sympathetic, and profoundly appreciative sketch of Edgar Poe, which has just been issued under this title, it is impossible not to remember the brave woman's arm, thrust

through the slide to serve as a bolt against the enemy." "The author, with an inexpressible grace, reserve, and tender, heroic charity,—having a right which no other person has to speak,—tells in a simple, transparent, and quiet strain, what she thinks of his career and genius." "In the delicate reticence of the book,—in its tone of inward music, as if the singer were humming a melody beneath the song she sings,—there is a pensive and peculiar charm. But it is not a eulogy. It is a criticism which is profound by the force of sympathy, and vigorous by its clear comprehension."

The present volume is the first collective publication of Mrs. Whitman's Poems. Twenty-five years ago a small book, entitled "Hours of Life, and other Poems, by Sarah Helen Whitman," was printed in Providence, containing about one half of the poems included in the present volume. The edition was small, and the circulation limited. But many of the poems had already become widely popular, and the book received a welcome, such as had been rarely accorded to any similar publication in this country, from the best judges of English and American literature.

George William Curtis wrote in "Putnam's Monthly:" "We have few collections of American verse so strongly individual as this; so permeated with that sincerity which instantly assures

the reader that he is not enjoying the distillation, through the poet, of another's experience, but tastes, at first hand, the honey-dew which has not fallen upon other pages. Such fresh and direct inspiration from nature, compelling the singer to express not only the sentiment inspired by the landscape, but to describe the landscape itself, with a success so remarkable that it is at once song and picture,—such pure and holy and feminine feeling for all changing aspects of nature and the year, as if the singer's heart were a harp so delicate that even chasing sun and shadow swept it into music, and yet a feeling entirely untainted with sentimentality,—such profound and solemnized passion, breathing through every word, as if the poet's life were consecrated to some sublime sorrow, which was, in the truest sense, 'sanctified,'—such affluence of extensive and rare cultivation, everywhere indicated and nowhere obtruded,—are not often discovered in any volume of poems, and never before in those of an American woman."

"In keen observation and delicate description of nature Mrs. Whitman resembles Bryant, except that there is a subtlety in her description as if it was derived less from observation of the spectacle and more from sympathy with the spirit. Hence her landscape painting has a glow, a tone, that we do not so deeply recognize in the other poet."

“The few translations from the French and German are among the best in English literature, and several of the sonnets addressed to an unknown are only to be matched by the passionate and superb Portuguese sonnets of Mrs. Browning.”

George Ripley wrote in the New York “Tribune” as follows: “The principal poem in this volume [Hours of Life] is remarkable for the life-like reality with which it weaves the recollections of a profound and intense experience into the natural materials of song. Here are all the usual elements of poetry,—a passionate love of nature, an imagination equally brilliant and plastic, a temperament keenly alive to all beautiful inspirations and influences, a taste ripened and enriched by exquisite culture, and a facility and charm of expression, uniting spontaneous grace and freshness with classical finish. But it is not these qualities that form the peculiar distinction of the volume before us. Rich as it is in characteristics that would establish an enviable poetical fame for any writer, the vein of thought and sentiment which it opens in its leading piece gives it a stamp of individuality, as a revelation of the inner life, which well-nigh eclipses the subordinate felicities of the volume.”

“Every reader will be struck with the delicacy of touch which Mrs. Whitman brings to the representation of nature. She has looked on the uni-

verse not merely with the artist's eye, but in the spirit of profound communion with its life, and with the passionate longing to wrest from it the solution of the 'eternal mystery.'"

It would be easy to multiply such tributes from the Magazines and Reviews of that day.

The poems in this volume were selected and partially revised for publication by Mrs. Whitman in the last year of her life. It will be observed that they contain occasional repetitions of sentiments, ideas, and favorite images, not only her own, but those of other poets. Mrs. Whitman regarded all true poetry as a contribution to the common language of poets, and often drew from this source without specially indicating it, except where, from unfamiliarity, the cultivated reader might fail to recognize the quotation.

Mrs. Whitman left the materials for a volume of her prose writings, and correspondence, largely autobiographical, to be published hereafter. This will include her "Edgar Poe and his Critics," and selections from her literary and personal correspondence of fifty years.

Notwithstanding the seclusion of Mrs. Whitman's life, few women had more friends. To these, everywhere, the present volume is inscribed.

POEMS.

“It cannot be unbound, my autumn sheaf:—
Then let it stand, a relic of the past,
Its mystery all its own, and it will last.”

POEMS.

A STILL DAY IN AUTUMN.

I LOVE to wander through the woodlands
 hoary,

In the soft gloom of an autumnal day,
When Summer gathers up her robes of glory,
 And, like a dream of beauty, glides away.

How through each loved, familiar path she
 lingers,

Serenely smiling through the golden mist,
Tinting the wild grape with her dewy fingers,
 Till the cool emerald turns to amethyst;

Kindling the faint stars of the hazel, shining
 To light the gloom of Autumn's mouldering
 halls;

With hoary plumes the clematis entwining,
 Where, o'er the rock, her withered garland
 falls.

Warm lights are on the sleepy uplands wan-
ing
Beneath dark clouds along the horizon
rolled,
Till the slant sunbeams, through their fringes
raining,
Bathe all the hills in melancholy gold.

The moist winds breathe of crispèd leaves and
flowers,
In the damp hollows of the woodland sown,
Mingling the freshness of autumnal showers
With spicy airs from cedar alleys blown.

Beside the brook and on the umbered meadow,
Where yellow fern-tufts fleck the faded
ground,
With folded lids beneath their palmy shadow,
The gentian nods, in dewy slumbers bound.

Upon those soft, fringed lids the bee sits
brooding,
Like a fond lover loath to say farewell ;
Or, with shut wings, through silken folds in-
truding,
Creeps near her heart his drowsy tale to
tell.

The little birds upon the hill-side lonely
Flit noiselessly along from spray to spray,
Silent as a sweet, wandering thought, that
only
Shows its bright wings and softly glides
away.

The scentless flowers, in the warm sunlight
dreaming,
Forget to breathe their fullness of delight ;
And through the trancèd woods soft airs are
streaming,
Still as the dew-fall of the summer night.

So, in my heart, a sweet, unwonted feeling
Stirs, like the wind in ocean's hollow shell,
Through all its secret chambers sadly stealing,
Yet finds no words its mystic charm to tell.

THE TRAILING ARBUTUS.

THERE 's a flower that grows by the greenwood
tree,
In its desolate beauty more dear to me
Than all that bask in the noontide beam
Through the long, bright summer by fount
and stream.
Like a pure hope nursed beneath sorrow's
wing,
Its timid buds from the cold moss spring ;
Their delicate hues like the pink sea-shell,
Or the shaded blush of the hyacinth's bell ;
Their breath more sweet than the faint per-
fume
That breathes from the bridal orange-bloom.
It is not found by the garden wall,
It wreathes no brow in the festal hall ;
But it dwells in the depths of the shadowy
wood,
And shines, like a star, in the solitude.
Never did numbers its name prolong,

Ne'er hath it floated on wings of song ;
Bard and minstrel have passed it by,
And left it, in silence and shade, to die.
But with joy to its cradle the wild bees come,
And praise its beauty with drony hum ;
And children love, in the season of spring,
To watch for its earliest blossoming.

In the dewy morn of an April day,
When the traveler lingers along the way ;
When the sod is sprinkled with tender green
Where rivulets water the earth, unseen ;
When the floating fringe on the maple's crest
Rivals the tulip's crimson vest,
And the budding leaves of the birch-trees
 throw
A trembling shade on the turf below ;
When my flower awakes from its dreamy rest,
And yields its lips to the sweet southwest,
Then, in those beautiful days of spring,
With hearts as light as the wild bird's wing,
Flinging their tasks and their toys aside,
Gay little groups through the wood-paths
 glide,
Peeping and peering among the trees
As they scent its breath on the passing breeze,
Hunting about, among lichens gray

And the tangled mosses beside the way,
Till they catch the glance of its quiet eye,
Like light that breaks through a cloudy sky.

For me, sweet blossom, thy tendrils cling
Round my heart of hearts as in childhood's
spring ;

And thy breath, as it floats on the wandering
air,

Wakes all the music of memory there.

Thou recallest the time when, a fearless child,
I roved all day through the wood-walks wild,
Seeking thy blossoms by bank and brae,
Wherever the snow-drifts had melted away.

Now as I linger, mid crowds alone,
Haunted by echoes of music flown ;
When the shadows deepen around my way,
And the light of reason but leads astray ;
When affections, nurtured with fondest care
In the trusting heart, become traitors there ;
When, weary of all that the world bestows,
I turn to nature for calm repose,
How fain my spirit, in some far glen,
Would fold her wings mid thy flowers again !

MOONRISE IN MAY.

LONG lights gleam o'er the western wold,
Kindling the brown moss into gold ;
The bright day fades into the blue
Of the far hollows, dim with dew ;
The breeze comes laden with perfume
From many an orchard white with bloom,
And all the mellow air is fraught
With beauty beyond Fancy's thought.

Outspread beneath me, breathing balm
Into the evening's golden calm,
Lie trellised gardens, thickly sown
With nodding lilacs, newly blown ;
Borders with hyacinthus plumed,
And beds with purple pansies gloomed ;
Cold snow-drops, jonquils pale and prim,
And flamy tulips, burning dim
In the cool twilight, till they fold
In sleep their oriflammes of gold.

With many a glimmering interchange
Of moss and flowers and terraced range,
The pleasant garden slopes away
Into the gloom of shadows gray,
Where, darkly green, the church-yard lies,
With all its silent memories :
There the first violets love to blow
About the head-stones, leaning low ;
There, from the golden willows, swing
The first green garlands of the spring ;
And the first bluebird builds her nest
By the old belfry's umbered crest.

Beyond, where groups of stately trees,
Waiting their vernal draperies,
Stand outlined on the evening sky,
The golden lakes of sunset lie ;
With many-colored isles of light,
Purple and pearl and chrysolite,
And realms of cloud-land, floating far
Beyond the horizon's dusky bar, —
Now fading from the lurid bloom
Of twilight to a silver gloom,
As the fair moon's ascending beam
Melts all things to a holy dream.

So fade the cloud-wreaths from my soul
Beneath thy solemn, soft control,

Enchantress of the stormy seas,
Priestess of Night's high mysteries !
Thy ray can pale the north light's plume,
And, where the throbbing stars illume
With their far-palpitating light
The holy cloisters of the night,
Thy presence can entrance their beams,
And lull them to diviner dreams.
To thee belong the silent spheres
Of memory, — the enchanted years
Of the dead Past, — the shrouded woes
That sleep in sculptural repose.

Thy solemn light doth interfuse
The magic world wherein I muse
With something too divinely fair
For earthly hope to harbor there ;
A faith that reconciles the will
Life's mystic sorrow to fulfill ;
A benison of love that falls
From the serene and silent halls
Of night, till through the lonely room
A heavenly odor seems to bloom,
And lilies of eternal peace
Glow through the moonlight's golden fleece.

THE MORNING-GLORY.

WHEN the peach ripens to a rosy bloom,
When purple grapes glow through the leafy
gloom
Of trellised vines, bright wonder, thou dost
come,
Cool as a star dropt from night's azure dome,
To light the early morning, that doth break
More softly beautiful for thy sweet sake.

Thy fleeting glory to my fancy seems
Like the strange flowers we gather in our
dreams ;
Hovering so lightly o'er the slender stem,
Wearing so meekly the proud diadem
Of penciled rays, that gave the name you bear
Unblamed amid the flowers, from year to year.
The tawny lily, flecked with jetty studs,
Pard-like, and dropping through long, pendent
buds,

Her purple anthers ; nor the poppy, bowed
In languid sleep, enfolding in a cloud
Of drowsy odors her too fervid heart,
Pierced by the day-god's barbed and burning
 dart ;
Nor the swart sunflower, her dark brows en-
 rolled
With their broad carcanets of living gold, —
A captive princess, following the car
Of her proud conqueror ; nor that sweet star,
The evening primrose, pallid with strange
 dreams
Born of the wan moon's melancholy beams ;
Nor any flower that doth its tendrils twine
Around my memory, hath a charm like thine.
Child of the morning, passionless and fair
As some ethereal creature of the air,
Waiting not for the bright lord of the hours
To weary of thy bloom in sultry bowers ;
Nor like the summer rose, that one by one,
Yields her fair, fragrant petals to the sun,
Faint with the envenomed sweetness of his
 smile,
That doth to lingering death her race beguile ;
But, as some spirit of the air doth fade
Into the light from its own essence rayed,
So, Glory of the morning, fair and cold,

Soon in thy circling halo dost thou fold
Thy virgin bloom, and from our vision hide
That form too fair, on earth, unsullied to
abide.¹

1849.

¹ "The disk of the *Convolvulus*, after remaining expanded for a few hours, gathers itself up within the five star-like rays that intersect the corolla until it is entirely concealed from sight." — ST. PIERRE.

WOOD-WALKS IN SPRING.

“Pleasure sits in the flower cups, and breathes itself out in fragrance.”
RAHEL.

As the fabled stone into music woke
When the morning sun o'er the marble broke,
So wakes the heart from its stern repose,
As, o'er brow and bosom, the spring wind
blows ;
So it stirs and trembles, as each low sigh
Of the breezy south comes murmuring by,—
Murmuring by, like a voice of love,
Wooing us forth amid flowers to rove ;
Breathing of meadow-paths, thickly sown
With pearls, from the blossoming fruit-trees
blown,
And of banks that slope to the southern sky,
Where languid violets love to lie.

No foliage droops o'er the wood-path now,
No dark vines, swinging from bough to bough ;
But a trembling shadow of silvery green
Falls through the young leaf's tender screen,

Like the hue that borders the snow-drop's bell,
Or lines the lid of an Indian shell ;
And a fairy light, like the firefly's glow,
Flickers and fades on the grass below.

There the pale anemone lifts her eye,
To look at the clouds as they wander by ;
Or lurks in the shade of a palmy fern,
To gather fresh dews in her waxen urn.
Where the moss lies thick on the brown
earth's breast,
The shy little may-flower weaves her nest ;
But the south wind blows o'er the fragrant
loam,

And betrays the path to her woodland home.

Already the green-budding, birchen spray
Winnows the balm from the breath of May ;
And the aspen thrills to a low, sweet tone
From the reedy bugle of Faunus blown.

In the tangled coppice, the dwarf-oak weaves
Her fringe-like blossoms and crimson leaves ;
The sallows their delicate buds unfold
Into downy feathers bedropped with gold ;
While, thick as stars in the midnight sky,
In the dark, wet meadows the cowslips lie.

A love-tint flushes the wind-flower's cheek,
Rich melodies gush from the violet's beak ;
On the rifts of the rock the wild columbines
grow,

Their heavy honey-cups bending low,
As a heart which vague, sweet thoughts op-
press
Droops with its burden of happiness.

There the waters drip from their moss-
rimmed wells,
With a sound like the tinkling of silver bells,
Or fall, with a mellow and flute-like flow,
Through the channeled clefts of the rock be-
low.

Soft music gushes in every tone,
And perfume in every breeze is blown ;
The flower in fragrance, the bird in song,
The glittering wave as it glides along, —
All breathe the incense of boundless bliss,
The eloquent music of happiness.
Yet sad would the spring-time of Nature seem
To the soul that wanders 'mid life's dark
dream,

Its glory a meteor that sweeps the sky,
A blossom that floats on the storm-wind by,
If it woke no thought of that starry clime
Beyond the desolate seas of Time ;
If it nurtured no delicate flower, to blow
On the hills where the palm and the amaranth
grow.

ON A STATUE OF DAVID.¹

Ay, this is he ! the bold and gentle boy —
That in lone pastures by the mountain's
side
Guarded his fold, and through the midnight
sky
Saw on the blast the God of battles ride ;
Beheld his bannered armies on the height,
And heard their clarion sound through all the
stormy night.

Though his fair locks lie all unshorn, and bare
To the bold toying of the mountain wind,
A conscious glory haunts the o'ershadowing
air,
And waits, with glittering coil, his brows to
bind,
While his proud temples bend superbly down,
As if they bore, e'en now, the burden of a
crown.

¹ Suggested by a model executed by Thomas F. Hoppin, of Providence.

Though a stern sorrow slumbers in his eyes,
As if his prophet glance foresaw the day
When the dark waters o'er his soul should rise,
And friends and lovers wander far away,
Yet the graced impress of that floral mouth
Breathes of love's golden dream and the voluptuous south.

Peerless in beauty as the prophet star,
That in the dewy trances of the dawn,
Floats o'er the solitary hills afar,
And brings sweet tidings of the lingering
morn ;
Or, weary at the day-god's loitering wain,
Strikes on the harp of light a soft, prelusive
strain.

So his wild harp, with psaltery and shawm,
Awoke the nations in thick darkness furled,
While mystic winds from Gilead's groves of
balm
Wafted its sweet hosannas through the
world ;
So, when the day-spring from on high, he
sang,
With joy the ancient hills and lonely valleys
rang.

Ay, this is he !— the minstrel, prophet, king,
Before whose arm princes and warriors sank ;
Who dwelt beneath Jehovah's mighty wing,
And from the “ river of his pleasures ”
drank ;
Or, through the rent pavilions of the storm,
Beheld the cloud of fire that veiled his awful
form.

And now he stands as when in Elah's vale,
Where warriors set the battle in array,
He met the Titan in his ponderous mail,
Whose haughty challenge many a summer's
day
Rang through the border hills, while all the
host
Of faithless Israel heard, and trembled at his
boast ; .

Till the slight stripling from the mountain fold
Stood, all unarmed, amid their sounding
shields,
And in his youth's first bloom, devoutly bold,
Dared the grim champion of a thousand
fields ;
So stands he now, as in Jehovah's might
Glorying, he met the foe and won the immor-
tal fight.

A NIGHT IN AUGUST.

“ And thenceforth all that once was fair
Grew fairer.”

How softly comes the summer wind
At evening o'er the hill,
Forever murmuring of thee
When busy crowds are still ;
The way-side flowers seem to guess
And whisper of my happiness.

The jasmine twines her snowy stars
Into a fairer wreath ;
The lily lifts her proud tiárs
More royally beneath ;
The snow-drop with her fairy bells,
In silver time, the story tells.

Through all the dusk and dewy hours,
The banded stars above
Are singing, in their airy towers,
The melodies of love ;

And clouds of shadowy silver fly
All night, like doves, athwart the sky.

Fair Dian lulls the throbbing stars
 Into Elysian dreams ;
And, rippling through my lattice bars,
 Her brooding glory streams
Around me, like the golden shower
That rained through Danæe's guarded tower.

And when the waning moon doth glide
 Into the valleys gray ;
When, like the music of a dream,
 The night-wind dies away ;
When all the way-side flowers have furled
Their wings, with morning dews impearled,

A low, bewildering melody
 Seems murmuring in my ear, —
Tones such as in the twilight wood
 The aspen thrills to hear,
When Faunus slumbers on the hill,
And all the entrancèd boughs are still.

August, 1848.

TO ——.

EVA, thy beauty comes to me
 To solace and to save ;
A marvel and a mystery,
 A beacon o'er the wave, —
A star above the jasper sea,
 A hope beyond the grave.

Oft, when thy harp-tones wild and sweet
 The waves of passion move,
Methinks pale Sappho's songs I hear
 Murmuring of Phaon's love, —
Pale Sappho's passion songs I hear
 Lamenting her lost love.

But in those tender, thoughtful eyes,
 That look so far away,
A pleading Pysche bids me rise
 To realms of purer day, —
A Psyche soaring to the skies,
 To realms of perfect day.

FLORALIE.

ALL the star-flowers on the hill
 Nod their sweet heads wearily ;
Through the sad September day,
 To my lonely heart they say,
 Floralie is far away.

All the little birds that sang
 In the copse so cheerily,
Fluttering from spray to spray,
 Seem in mournful notes to say,
 Floralie is far away — far away.

All the morning-stars that look
 Through the dawn so drearily,
Turning from the joyless day,
 By their sadness seem to say,
 Floralie is far away, —
 Far away — far, far away.

STANZAS WITH A BRIDAL RING.

THE young moon hides her virgin heart
 Within a ring of gold ;
So doth this little cycle all
 My bosom's love enfold,
And tell the tale that from my lips
 Seems ever half untold ;
Like the rich legend of the East,
 That weaves and interweaves
Its linkèd sweetness, or the rose
 That hath a hundred leaves.

This little fairy talisman
Shall love's serene Elysium span ;
No hope shall pass its mystic round,
And all within be holy ground :
And here, as in the elfin ring
 Where fairies dance by night,
The green oases of the heart
 Shall keep their verdure bright,
And hope, within this magic round,
 Still blossom in delight.

THE GOLDEN BALL.

A TALE OF FAERIE.

“ In olden dayes
All was the land fulfilled of Faerie —
The Elf Queen, with her jollie companie,
Danced full oft in many a grassy mede.
This was the old opinion, as I rede. —
I speak of many hundred years ago —
But now can no man see the Elvès mo.”

CHAUCER.

IN the hushed and silken chamber
Of my childhood, Eleanore,
When the daylight’s dying amber
Faded on the dusky floor ;

When the village bells were ringing
At the hour of evening prayer,
And the little birds were winging
Homeward through the dewy air,

Wooing me to twilight slumbers,
In that soft and balmy clime,
Often have I heard the numbers
Of the ancient fairy-rhyme, —

Listened to the mythic stories
Taught when fancy's charmed sway
Filled with visionary glories
All my childhood's golden day.

In the dull and drear December,
Sitting by the hearth-light's gleam,
Often do I still remember
Tales that haunt me like a dream,

Often I recall the story
Of the outcast child forlorn,
Doomed to roam in forest hoary,
From the step-dame's cruel scorn.

Long she wandered sad and lonely,
Till the daylight's dying bloom
Left one silver planet only
Trembling through the twilight gloom.

Orphaned in this world of sorrow,
Chased by savage beasts of prey ;
Doomed, from frantic fears, to borrow
Strength to bear her on her way.

Still she wandered, faint and weary,
Through the forest wild and wide,

Till her thoughts grew dark and dreary,
And her heart with terror died.

When a gracious fairy, wandering
Forth to greet the evening star,
Found her near a torrent, pondering
How to pass its watery bar.

Tenderly the gentle stranger
Led her to the foaming fall ;
There, to guide her feet from danger,
Down she flung a Golden Ball.

Shrined within its charmed hollow
Many a mystic virtue lay ;
Safely might her footsteps follow
Wheresoe'er it led the way.

Throbbed her heart with fear and wonder,
As the magic globe of gold
Onward through the rushing thunder
Of the stormy torrent rolled :

On where boundless forests, burning,
Scorched the air and scathed the sight,
From earth's livid features turning
Back the solemn pall of night :

Still on golden axis rolling,
Onward, onward, still it sped, —
Still the maid, her fears controlling,
Fleetly following as it fled :

While the raging waters bore her
Safely o'er their hollow way,
And the flame-lights flashing o'er her
Paled like stars at break of day, —

Paled before her virgin honor,
Paled before her love and truth ;
Savage natures, gazing on her,
Turned to pity and to ruth.

So she passed through flood and forest, —
Passed the ogre's yawning gate ;
And when danger threatened sorest
Calmly trod the path of fate.

Till the night that seemed so dreary
Grew more beautiful than day ;
And her little feet, so weary,
Glided gently on their way, —

Glided o'er the grassy meadows
Steeped in perfume, starred with dew,

Glided 'neath the forest shadows
Till the moonlight, slanting through,

Gleamed athwart a fountain sleeping
Calmly in its hollow cells,
Where were little fishes leaping
All about the lily-bells.

Soon the lilies seemed to shiver,
And a tremor shook the air —
Curdled all the sleeping river —
Woke the thunder in its lair !

Lo ! a fish from out the water
Rising oped its rosy gills ;
'T was the gracious fairy's daughter,
And the air with music thrills,

As a sudden glory, bending
O'er the fountain's mystic gleam,
Changed her to a form transcending
Fantasy's divinest dream.

Water blooms, with olive twining,
Crowned a brow serenely sweet ;
Robes, like woven lilies shining,
Flowed in folds about her feet.

With a look of soft imploring,
Thus she spoke, in rippling tones,
Sweet as summer waters pouring
Over reeds and pebble-stones :

“ Thou hast conquered, little stranger !
All thy bitter trials past,
Safe, through sorrow and through danger,
Thou hast won the goal at last.

“ Lift me from the silent water,
Let me on thy bosom lie ;
For I am a fairy’s daughter
Thrallèd by cruel sorcery.

“ Doomed beneath the wave forever,
Like the virgin Truth, to dwell,
Till a mortal hand shall sever,
Link by link, the charmèd spell ;

“ Till a faithful heart shall fold me
To its home of truth and love, —
So the ancient Fates have told me,
And the answering stars approve.

“ Lift me, then, from out the river,
Now my charmèd life doth cease ;

Henceforth I am thine forever;
Guard me, for my name is Peace."

Thus, dear child, the mythic story
Chimes to truth's unerring strain,
As the moon, in softened glory,
Sings the day-star's sweet refrain.

Thus, though step-dame Nature chide thee,
And the snares of passion thrall,
Unto heavenly Peace shall guide thee
FAITH's unerring GOLDEN BALL.

ON FANNIE'S CHARM LAMP.

WITHIN this little fairy urn
No earthly naphthas blaze and burn ;
But spells of necromantic power
Lurk in the little silver flower :
It is the very lamp, I ween,
The wondrous lamp of Aladeen.

And he who did the gift impart
To the fair regent of his heart,
Through life his folly shall deplore,
Slave of the lamp for evermore ;
Slave to the lady and the queen
Who holds the lamp of Aladeen.

IN APRIL'S DIM AND SHOWERY NIGHTS.

IN April's dim and showery nights,
When music melts along the air,
And Memory wakens at the kiss
Of wandering perfumes, faint and rare ;

Sweet, spring-time perfumes, such as won
Prosèrpina from realms of gloom,
To bathe her bright locks in the sun,
Or bind them with the pansy's bloom ;

When light winds rift the fragrant bowers
Where orchards shed their floral wreath,
Strewing the turf with starry flowers,
And dropping pearls at every breath ;

When, all night long, the boughs are stirred
With fitful warblings from the nest,
And the heart flutters, like a bird,
With its sweet, passionless unrest ;

Oh ! then, beloved, I think on thee,
And on that life, so strangely fair,
Ere yet one cloud of memory
Had gathered in hope's golden air.

I think on thee and thy lone grave
On the green hill-side, far away ;
I see the wilding flowers that wave
Around thee, as the night winds sway.

And still, though only clouds remain
On life's horizon, cold and drear,
The dream of youth returns again
With the sweet promise of the year.

April, 1848.

ON A MAGDALEN BY CARLO DOLCE.

THOUGH every line of that sweet, thoughtful
face
Seems touched by sorrow to a softer grace ;
Though o'er thy cheek's young bloom a blight
hath passed,
And dimmed its pensive beauty,—from thine
eye,
With the soft gloom of gathering tears o'er-
cast,
Doth love shine forth, o'er all, triumphantly ;
A light which shame nor sorrow could impair,
Unquenched, undimmed, through years of lone
despair.

O love, immortal love ! not all in vain
The young heart wastes beneath life's weary
chain,
Filled with thy bright ideal,— whose excess
Of beauty mocks our utter loneliness.

The weary bark, long tossing on the shore,
Shall find its haven when the storm is o'er ;
The wandering bee its hive, the bird its nest,
And the lone heart of love in heaven its home
of rest.

SUMMER'S CALL TO THE LITTLE ORPHAN.

“ Viens j'ai des fruits d'or, j'ai des roses ;
J'en remplirai tes petits bras.”

VICTOR HUGO.

THE summer skies are darkly blue,
The days are still and bright,
And Evening trails her robes of gold
Through the dim halls of Night.

Then, when the little orphan wakes,
A low voice whispers, “ Come,
And all day wander at thy will
Beneath my azure dome.

“ Beneath my vaulted, azure dome,
Through all my flowery lands,
No higher than the lowly thatch
The royal palace stands.

“ I'll fill thy little longing arms
With fruits and wilding flowers ;

I 'll tell thee tales of fairy-land
In the long twilight hours."

The orphan hears that wooing voice ;
Awhile he softly broods, —
Then hastens down the sunny slopes,
Into the twilight woods.

The waving branches murmur
Strange secrets in his ear,
But the nodding flowers welcome him,
And whisper, " Never fear."

He sees the squirrel peeping
From the coverts cool and dim,
And the water-lilies sleeping
Along the fountain's brim.

He hears the wild bee humming
In the roses by the rill ;
He nestles in the hollow tree,
He clammers up the hill.

He weaves a little basket
From the willow as he goes,
And he heaps it up with blackberries,
And blueberries, and sloes.

The brook stays him, at the crossing,
In its waters cool and sweet,
And the pebbles leap around him,
And frolic at his feet.

Half fearfully, half joyfully,
He treads the forest dim,
Till he hears the wood-birds chaunting
Their holy, sylvan hymn.

Then, in the cool of eventide,
The Father's voice he hears,
As men heard it in the Eden
Of Earth's paradisal years.

The redbird furls her shining wing,
The squirrel seeks his lair ;
The flowers, folding up their leaves,
Incline their heads in prayer.

The orphan feels a brooding calm
O'er all his senses creep ;
And, by the little ground-bird's nest,
He lays him down to sleep.

The Moon comes gliding through the trees,
And softly stoops to spread

Her dainty silver kirtle
Upon his grassy bed.

The drowsy Night-wind murmuring
Its quaint old tunes the while ;
Till Morning wakes him with a song,
And greets him with a smile.

LINES WRITTEN IN NOVEMBER.

FAREWELL the forest shade, the twilight grove,
The turfy path with fern and flowers inwove,
Where through long summer days I wandered
far,

Till warned of Evening by her folding star.
No more I linger by the fountain's play,
Where arching boughs shut out the sultry
ray,

Making at noontide hours a dewy gloom
O'er the moist marge, where weeds and wild
flowers bloom ;

Till, from the western sun, a glancing flood
Of arrowy radiance filled the twilight wood,
Glinting athwart each leafy, verdant fold,
And flecking all the turf with drops of gold.

Sweet sang the wild bird on the waving bough
Where cold November winds are wailing now ;
The chirp of insects on the sunny lea,
And the low, drowsy bugle of the bee,

Are silent all ; closed is their vesper lay,
Borne by the breeze of Autumn far away.
Yet still the withered heath I love to rove,
The bare, brown meadow, and the leafless
grove ;

Still love to tread the bleak hill's rocky side,
Where nodding asters wave in purple pride,
Or, from its summit, listen to the flow
Of the dark waters, booming far below.

Still through the tangling, pathless copse I
stray,

Where sere and rustling leaves obstruct the
way,

To find the last, pale blossom of the year,
That strangely blooms when all is dark and
drear ;

The wild witch-hazel, fraught with mystic
power

To ban or bless, as sorcery rules the hour.

Then, homeward wending, through the dusky
vale,

Where winding rills their evening damps ex-
hale,

Pause by the dark pool, in whose sleeping wave
Pale Dian loves her golden locks to lave ;
As when she stole upon Endymion's rest,
And his young dreams with heavenly beauty
blest.

And thou, " stern ruler of the inverted year,"
Cold, cheerless Winter, hath thy wild career
No sweet, peculiar pleasures for the heart,
That can ideal worth to rudest forms impart ?
When, through thy long, dark nights, cold
sleet and rain

Patter and splash against the frosty pane,
Warm curtained from the storm, I love to lie,
Wakeful, and listening to the lullaby
Of fitful winds, that as they rise and fall
Send hollow murmurs through the echoing hall.

Oft, by the blazing hearth at even-tide,
I love to see the fitful shadows glide,
In flickering motion, o'er the illumined wall,
Till slumber's honey-dew my senses thrall ;
Then, while in dreamy consciousness, I lie
'Twixt sleep and waking, fairy fantasy
Culls, from the golden past, a treasured store,
And weaves a dream so sweet, hope could not
ask for more.

In the cold splendor of a frosty night,
When blazing stars burn with intenser light
Through the blue vault of heaven ; when the
keen air
Sculptures in bolder lines the uplands bare ;
When sleeps the shrouded earth, in solemn
trance,

Beneath the wan moon's melancholy glance ;
I love to mark earth's sister planets rise,
And in pale beauty tread the midnight skies ;
Where, like lone pilgrims, constant as the
night,

They fill their dark urns from the fount of light.

I love the Borealis flames that fly,
Fitful and wild, athwart the northern sky ;
The storied constellations, like a page
Fraught with the wonders of a former age,
Where monsters grim, gorgons, and hydras
rise,

And "gods and heroes blaze along the skies."

Thus Nature's music, various as the hour,
Solemn or sweet, hath ever mystic power
Still to preserve the unperverted heart
Awake to love and beauty ; to impart
Treasures of thought and feeling, pure and
deep,
That aid the doubting soul its heavenward
course to keep.

EVENING ON THE BANKS OF THE MOSHASSUCK.

“Now to the sessions of sweet, silent thought,
I summon up remembrance of things past.”

SHAKESPEARE'S *Sonnets*.

AGAIN September's golden day,
Serenely still, intensely bright,
Fades on the umbered hills away,
And melts into the coming night.
Again Moshassuck's silver tide
Reflects each green herb on its side,
Each tasseled wreath and tangling vine,
Whose tendrils o'er its margin twine.

And standing on its velvet shore,
Where yester-night, with thee, I stood,
I trace its devious course once more,
Far winding on, through vale and wood :
Now glimmering through yon golden mist,
By the last, glinting sunbeams kissed ;
Now lost, where lengthening shadows fall
From hazel copse and moss-fringed wall.

Near where yon rocks the stream inurn,
The lonely gentian blossoms still ;
Still wave the star-flower and the fern
O'er the soft outline of the hill ;
While, far aloft, where pine-trees throw
Their shade athwart the sunset glow,
Thin vapors cloud the illumined air,
And parting daylight lingers there.

But ah, no longer thou art near,
This varied loveliness to see ;
And I, though fondly lingering here,
To-night, can only think on thee.
The flowers thy gentle hand caressed
Still lie unwithered on my breast ;
And still thy footsteps print the shore,
Where thou and I may rove no more.

Again I hear the murmuring fall
Of water from some distant dell ;
The beetle's hum, the cricket's call,
And, far away, that evening bell.
Again, again, those sounds I hear ;
But oh, how desolate and drear
They seem to-night ! how like a knell
The music of that evening bell !

Again the new moon in the west,
Scarce seen upon yon golden sky,
Hangs o'er the mountain's purple crest,
 With one pale planet trembling nigh ;
And beautiful her pearly light
As when we blessed its beams last night ;
But thou art on the far blue sea,
And I can only think on thee.

September, 1839.

THE GARDEN SEPULCHRE.

WRITTEN FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE CEMETERY AT SWAN
POINT, R. I.

In the faith of Him who saw
The eternal morning rise,
Through the open gates of pearl,
On the hills of Paradise,—

Looking to the promised land,
Saw the verdant palms, that wave
In the calm and lustrous air,
Through the shadows of the grave ;

In his name whose deathless love,
With a glory all divine,
Filled the garden sepulchre
Far away in Palestine ;

We would consecrate a place
Where our loved ones may repose,
When the storms of life are past,
And the weary eyelids close ;

Fairer than a festal hall
Wreath the chambers of their rest,
Sacred to the tears that fall
O'er the slumbers of the blest, —

Sacred to the hopes that rise
Heavenward from this vale of tears,
Soaring, with unwearied wing,
Through the illimitable years.

Each sweet nursling of the spring
Here shall weep its fresh'ning dews ;
Here its fragile censer swing,
And all its fragrant soul diffuse.

The lily, in her white symar,
Fondly o'er the turf shall wave ;
Asphodels and violets star
All the greensward of the grave.

Here the pale anemone
In the April breeze shall nod,
And the may-flower weave her blooms
Through and through the velvet sod.

Bending by the storied urn,
Purple eglantine shall blow,

Till the pallid marble takes,
From her cheek, a tender glow.

Where the folding branches close
In a verdant coronal,
Through their dim and dreaming boughs
Faintly shall the sunbeams fall.

Memories, mournful, yet how sweet !
Here shall weave their mystic spell ;
Angels tread, with silent feet,
Paths where love and sorrow dwell.

No rude sound of earth shall break
The dim quiet, evermore ;
But the winds and waves shall chant
A requiem on the lonely shore.

Flitting through the laurel's gloom,
The humming-bird shall wander by,
Winnowing the floral bloom
From cups of wreathèd ivory.

The bee shall wind his fairy horn,
Faintly murmuring on the ear ;
Sounds that seem of silence born
Soothe the soul of sadness here ;

Many a low and mystic word,
From the realm of shadows sent,
In the busy throng unheard,
Make the silence eloquent :

Words of sweetest promise, spoken
Only where the dirge is sung ;
Where the golden bowl is broken,
And the silver chord unstrung.

Faith shall, with uplifted eye,
All the solitude illume ;
Hope and Memory shall sit,
Shining seraphs, by the tomb.

A DAY OF THE INDIAN SUMMER.

“ Yet one more smile, departing distant sun,
Ere o'er the frozen earth the loud winds run,
And snows are sifted o'er the meadows bare.” — BRYANT.

A DAY of golden beauty ! Through the night
The hoar-frost gathered, o'er each leaf and
spray

Weaving its filmy net-work ; thin and bright,
And shimmering like silver in the ray
Of the soft, sunny morning ; turf and tree
Pranct in its delicate embroidery,
And every withered stump and mossy stone,
With gems incrusted and with seed-pearl sown ;
While in the hedge the frosted berries glow,
The scarlet holly and the purple sloe,
And all is gorgeous, fairy-like, and frail
As the famed gardens of the Arabian tale.

How soft and still the autumnal landscape lies,
Calmly outspread beneath the smiling skies ;
As if the earth, in prodigal array
Of gems and broidered robes, kept holiday,

Her harvest yielded and her work all done,
Basking in beauty 'neath the Autumn sun !

Yet once more, through the soft and balmy
day,

Up the brown hill-side, by the woodland way,
Far let us rove, through dreamy solitudes
Where "Autumn's smile beams through the
yellow woods,"

Fondly retracing each sweet summer haunt
And sylvan pathway ; where the sunbeams
slant

Through yonder copse, kindling the yellow stars
Of the witch-hazel with their golden bars ;
Or, lingering down this dim and shadowy lane,
Where still the damp sod wears an emerald
stain,

Though ripe brown nuts hang clustering in the
hedge,

And the rude barberry, o'er yon rocky ledge,
Droops with its pendant corals. When the
showers

Of April clothed this winding path with flowers,
Here oft we sought the violet, as it lay
Buried in beds of moss and lichens gray ;
And still the aster greets us, as we pass,
With her faint smile,— among the withered
grass

Beside the way, lingering as loath of heart,
Like me, from these sweet solitudes to part.

Now seek we the dank borders of the stream,
Where the tall fern-tufts shed a tawny gleam
Over the water from their saffron plumes ;
And, clustering near, the modest gentian blooms
Lonely around, hallowed by sweetest song,
The last and loveliest of the floral throng.
Yet here we may not linger, for behold
Where the stream widens, like a sea of gold
Outspreading far before us ! All around
Steep, wooded heights and sloping uplands
bound
The sheltered scene ; along the distant shore,
Through colored woods, the glinting sunbeams
pour,
Touching their foliage with a thousand shades
And hues of beauty, as the red light fades
Beneath the shadow of a fleecy shroud,
Or, through the rifted silver of the cloud,
Pours down a brighter gleam. Gray willows
lave
Their pendant branches in the crystal wave,
And slender birch-trees o'er its banks incline,
Whose tall, slight stems across the water shine

Like shafts of silver ; there the tawny elm, —
The fairest subject of the sylvan realm, —
The tufted pine-tree, and the cedar dark,
And the young chestnut, its smooth, polished
bark

Gleaming like porphyry in the yellow light ;
The dark brown oak and the rich maple, dight
In robes of scarlet, — all are standing there,
So still, so calm, in the soft, misty air,
That not a leaf is stirring ; not a sound
Startles the deep repose that broods around,
Save when the robin's melancholy song
Is heard amid the coppice, and along
The sunny side of yonder moss-grown wall
That skirts our path the cricket's chirping call,
Or the fond murmur of the drowsy bee
O'er some lone floweret on the sunny lea,
And, heard at intervals, a patterning sound
Of ripened acorns rustling to the ground
Through the crisp, withered leaves. How
lonely all,
How calmly beautiful ! Long shadows fall
More darkly o'er the wave as day declines,
Yet from the west a deeper glory shines ;
While every crested hill and rocky height
Each moment varies in the kindling light

To some new form of beauty, changing
through

All shades and colors of the rainbow's hue,
The last still loveliest, till the gorgeous day
Melts in a flood of golden light away ;
And all is o'er. Before to-morrow's sun
Cold winds may rise, and shrouding shadows
dun

Obscure the scene ; yet shall these fading hues
And fleeting forms their loveliness transfuse
Into the mind, and memory shall burn
The painting in on her enameled urn
In undecaying colors. When the blast
Hurtles around and snows are gathering fast,
When musing sadly by the twilight hearth,
Or lonely wandering through life's crowded
path,

Its quiet beauty, rising through the gloom,
Shall soothe the languid spirits and illume
The drooping fancy, — winning back the soul
To cheerful thoughts through Nature's sweet
control.

A NOVEMBER LANDSCAPE.

How like a rich and gorgeous picture hung
In memory's storied hall seems that fair scene
O'er which long years their mellowing tints
have flung !

The way-side flowers had faded one by one,
Hoar were the hills, the meadows drear and dun,

When homeward wending, 'neath the dusky
screen

Of the autumnal woods, at close of day,
As o'er a pine-clad height my pathway lay,
Lo ! at a sudden turn, the vale below
Lay far outspread, all flushed with purple light ;
Gray rocks and umbered woods gave back the
glow

Of the last day-beams, fading into night ;
While down a glen where dark Moshassuck
flows,

With all its kindling lamps the distant city
rose.

A HOLLOW OF THE HILLS.

IN the soft gloom of Summer's balmy eve,
When from the lingering glances of the Sun
The sad Earth turns away her blushing cheek,
Mantling its glow in twilight's shadowy veil,
Oft 'mid the falling dews I love to stray
Onward and onward, through the pleasant
fields,

Far up the lilyed borders of the stream,
To this green, silent hollow of the hills,
Endeared by thronging memories of the past.

Oft have I lingered on this rustic bridge,
To view the limpid waters winding on
Under dim-vaulted woods, whose woven boughs
Of beech and maple and broad sycamore
Throw their soft, moving shadows o'er the
wave;

While blossomed vines, dropped to the water's
brim,
Hang idly swaying in the summer wind.

The birds that wander through the twilight
heaven
Are mirrored far beneath me ; and young
leaves
That tremble on the birch-tree's silver boughs,
In the cool wave reflected, gleam below,
Like twinkling stars athwart the verdant gloom.

A sound of rippling waters rises sweet
Amid the silence ; and the western breeze,
Sighing through sedges and low meadow-
blooms,
Comes wafting gentle thoughts from Memory's
land,
And wakes the long-hushed music of the
heart.

Oft dewy spring hath brimmed the brook
with showers ;
Oft hath the long, bright summer fringed its
banks
With breathing blossoms ; and the autumn
sun
Shed mellow hues o'er all its wooded shores,
Since first I trod these paths, in youth's sweet
prime,
With loved ones whom Time's desolating wave
Hath wafted now forever from my side.

Long years have passed, and on its flowery
brink,

Bereft and sorrow-taught, alone I stand,
Listening the hollow music of the wind.
Alone — alone : the stars are far away,
And wild clouds wander o'er the face of
heaven ;

But still the green earth wears her summer
crown,
And whispers hope through all her breathing
flowers.

Not all in vain the vision of our youth,
The apocalypse of beauty and of love,
The stag-like heart of hope. Life's mystic
dream

The soul shall yet interpret ; to our prayer
The Isis veil be lifted. Though we pine
E'en 'mid the ungathered roses of our youth,
Pierced with strange pangs and longings in-
finite,

As if earth's fairest flowers served but to wake
Sad, haunting memories of our Eden home ;
Not all in vain. Meantime, in patient trust,
Rest we on Nature's bosom : from her eye,
Serene and still, drinking in faith and love ;
To her calm pulse attempering the heart
That throbs too wildly for ideal bliss.

Oh gentle Mother, heal me, for I faint
Upon life's arid pathway ; or apart,
On lonely mountain heights, oft hear a voice
Tempting my agony with perilous thoughts
Of death's calm, dreamless slumber ; and my
feet
On the dark mountains stumble. Near thy
heart,
Close nestling, let me lie ; and let thy breath,
Fragrant and cool, fall on my fever'd cheek,
As in those unworn ages ere pale thought
Forestalled life's patient harvest. Give me
strength
To follow wheresoe'er o'er the world's waste
The cloudy pillar moveth ; till at last
It guide to pleasant vales and pastures green
By the still waters of eternal life.

TO ——.

THINE is the hope that knows no fear,
The patient heart and true;
Whose wrongs but make the right more dear,
Whose love no loss may rue.

Sometimes a soft and sad surprise, —
A pitying angel, passion free, —
Looks earthward, from thy tender eyes,
Upon our frail humanity.

Thy calm brow speaks a nature true,
A marble constancy of soul,
A heart that can its dreams subdue
To wisdom's passionless control.

Thine eye hath the serenity
By Raphael to the Virgin given,
And from its blue benignity
Looks out the holy light of heaven.

MORNING AFTER A STORM.

THE wan and melancholy stars
Are fading with the fading gloom,
And, through the Orient's cloudy bars,
I see the rose of morning bloom.

All flushed, and fairer for the storm,
It opens on our vernal skies,
Divinely beautiful and warm,
As on the hills of Paradise.

And on its breast a shining spark,
Like a bright drop of morning dew,
Lies glittering on the rosy dark,
Then melts and mingles with the blue.

Sweet morning-star ! thy silver beams,
Foretell a fairer life to come ;
Arouse the sleeper from his dreams
And call the wandering spirit home.

My soul, ascending like a lark,
Would follow on thine airy flight ;
And like yon little diamond spark,
Dissolve into the realms of light.

TO E. O. S.

“Eos, fair Goddess of the Morn ! whose eyes
Drive back Night’s wandering ghosts.”—HORNE’s *Orion*.

WHEN issuing from the realms of “Shadow Land”

I see thee mid the Orient’s kindling bloom,
With mystic lilies gleaming in thy hand,

Gathered by dream-light in the dusky gloom
Of bowers enchanted — I behold again

The fabled Goddess of the Morning, veiled
In fleecy clouds. Thy cheek, so softly paled
With memories of the Night’s mysterious
reign,

And something of the star-light, burning still
In thy deep, dreamy eyes, do but fulfill
The vision more divinely to my thought :

While all the cheerful hopes enkindling
round thee —

Warm hopes, wherewith thy prescient soul
hath crowned thee —

Are with the breath of morning fragrance
fraught.

SHE BLOOMS NO MORE.

“Oh primavera, gioventu dell’ anno,
Bella madre di fiori,
Tu torni ben, ma teco
Non tornani i sereni
E fortunati di delle mi gioge.” — GUARINI.

I DREAD to see the summer sun
Come glowing up the sky,
And early pansies, one by one,
Opening the violet eye.

Again the fair azalea bows
Beneath her snowy crest ;
In yonder hedge the hawthorn blows,
The robin builds her nest ;

The tulips lift their proud tiars,
The lilac waves her plumes ;
And, peeping through my lattice-bars,
The rose-acacia blooms.

But she can bloom on earth no more,
Whose early doom I mourn ;

Nor spring nor summer can restore
Our flower, untimely shorn.

She was our morning-glory,
Our primrose, pure and pale,
Our little mountain daisy,
Our lily of the vale.

Now dim as folded violets,
Her eyes of dewy light ;
And her rosy lips have mournfully
Breathed out their last good-night.

'T is therefore that I dread to see
The glowing summer sun ;
And the balmy blossoms on the tree,
Unfolding one by one.

THE PAST.

“So fern, und doch so nah.” — GOETHE.

THICK darkness broodeth o'er the world :
 The raven pinions of the Night,
Close on her silent bosom furled,
 Reflect no gleam of Orient light.
E'en the wild Norland fires that mocked
 The faint bloom of the eastern sky,
Now leave me, in close darkness locked,
 To-night's weird realm of fantasy.

Borne from pale shadow-lands remote,
 A morphean music, wildly sweet,
Seems, on the starless gloom, to float,
 Like the white-pinioned Paraclete.
Softly into my dream it flows,
 Then faints into the silence drear ;
While from the hollow dark outgrows
 The phantom Past, pale gliding near.

The visioned Past ; so strangely fair !
 So veiled in shadowy, soft regrets.

So steeped in sadness, like the air
That lingers when the day-star sets !
Ah ! could I fold it to my heart,
On its cold lip my kisses press,
This waste of aching life impart,
To win it back from nothingness !

I loathe the purple light of day,
And shun the morning's golden star,
Beside that shadowy form to stray,
Forever near, yet oh how far !
Thin as a cloud of summer even,
All beauty from my gaze it bars ;
Shuts out the silver cope of heaven,
And glooms athwart the dying stars.

Cold, sad, and spectral, by my side,
It breathes of love's ethereal bloom, —
Of bridal memories, long affied
To the dread silence of the tomb :
Sweet, cloistered memories, that the heart
Shuts close within its chalice cold ;
Faint perfumes, that no more dispart
From the bruised lily's floral fold.

“ My soul is weary of her life ; ”
My heart sinks with a slow despair ;

The solemn, star-lit hours are rife
With fantasy ; the noontide glare,
And the cool morning, fancy free,
Are false with shadows ; for the day
Brings no blithe sense of verity,
Nor wins from twilight thoughts away.

Oh, bathe me in the Lethean stream,
And feed me on the lotus flowers ;
Shut out this false, bewildering dream,
This memory of departed hours !
Sweet haunting dream ! so strangely fair —
So veiled in shadowy, soft regrets —
So steeped in sadness, like the air
That lingers when the day-star sets !

The Future can no charm confer,
My heart's deep solitudes to break ;
No angel's foot again shall stir
The waters of that silent lake.
I wander in pale dreams away,
And shun the morning's golden star,
To follow still that failing ray,
Forever near, yet oh how far !

Feb., 1846.

“THE RAVEN.”

RAVEN, from the dim dominions
 On the Night’s Plutonian shore,
Oft I hear thy dusky pinions
 Wave and flutter round my door—
See the shadow of thy pinions
 Float along the moon-lit floor ;

Often, from the oak-woods glooming
 Round some dim ancestral tower,
In the lurid distance looming —
 Some high solitary tower —
I can hear thy storm-cry booming
 Through the lonely midnight hour.

When the moon is at the zenith,
 Thou dost haunt the moated hall,
Where the marish flower greeneth
 O’er the waters, like a pall —
Where the House of Usher leaneth,
 Darkly nodding to its fall :

There I see thee, dimly gliding,—
See thy black plumes waving slow,—
In its hollow casements hiding,
When their shadow yawns below,
To the sullen tarn confiding
The dark secrets of their woe:—

See thee, when the stars are burning
In their cressets, silver clear,—
When Ligeia's spirit yearning
For the earth-life, wanders near,—
When Morella's soul returning,
Weirdly whispers “I am here.”

Once, within a realm enchanted,
On a far isle of the seas,
By unearthly visions haunted,
By unearthly melodies,
Where the evening sunlight slanted
Golden through the garden trees,—

Where the dreamy moonlight dozes,
Where the early violets dwell,
Listening to the silver closes
Of a lyric loved too well,
Suddenly, among the roses,
Like a cloud, thy shadow fell.

Once, where Ulalume lies sleeping,
 Hard by Auber's haunted mere,
With the ghouls a vigil keeping,
 On that night of all the year,
Came thy sounding pinions, sweeping
 Through the leafless woods of Weir !

Oft, with Proserpine I wander
 On the Night's Plutonian shore,
Hoping, fearing, while I ponder
 On thy loved and lost Lenore —
On the demon doubts that sunder
 Soul from soul for evermore ;

Trusting, though with sorrow laden,
 That when life's dark dream is o'er,
By whatever name the maiden
 Lives within thy mystic lore,
Eiros, in that distant Aidenn,
 Shall his Charmion meet once more.

REMEMBERED MUSIC.

Oh, lonely heart ! why do thy pulses beat
 To the hushed music of a voice so dear,
That all sweet, mournful cadences repeat
 Its low, bewildering accents to thine ear.
Why dost thou question the pale stars to know
 If that rich music floats upon the air,
In those far realms where, else, their fires
 would glow
 Forever beautiful to thy despair ?
Trust thou in God ; for, far within the veil,
 Where glad hosannas through the empyrean
 roll,
And choral anthems of the angel's hail
 With hallelujah's sweet the enfranchised
 soul, —
The voice that sang earth's sorrow through
 earth's night,
Shall with glad seraphs sing, in God's great
 light.

OUR ISLAND OF DREAMS.

“ By the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.” — KEATS.

TELL him I lingered alone on the shore,
Where we parted, in sorrow, to meet never
more ;
The night wind blew cold on my desolate heart,
But colder those wild words of doom, “ Ye
must part ? ”

O'er the dark, heaving waters, I sent forth a
cry ;
Save the wail of those waters there came no
reply.
I longed, like a bird, o'er the billows to flee,
From our lone island home and the moan of
the sea :

Away — far away — from the wild ocean shore,
Where the waves ever murmur, “ No more,
never more ; ”

Where I wake, in the wild noon of midnight,
 to hear
That lone song of the surges, so mournful and
 drear.

When the clouds that now veil from us heaven's
 fair light,
Their soft, silver lining turn forth on the night ;
When time shall the vapors of falsehood dispel,
He shall know if I loved him ; but never how
 well.

1849.

THE LAST FLOWERS.

“The undying voice of that dead time,
With its interminable chime,
Rings on my spirit like a knell.”

Dost thou remember that Autumnal day
When by the Seekonk’s lonely wave we
stood,
And marked the languor of repose that lay,
Softer than sleep, on valley, wave, and wood ?

A trance of holy sadness seemed to lull
The charmèd earth and circumambient air,
And the low murmur of the leaves seemed full
Of a resigned and passionless despair.

Though the warm breath of summer lingered
still
In the lone paths where late her footsteps
passed,
The pallid star-flowers on the purple hill
Sighed dreamily, “We are the last ! the last !”

I stood beside thee, and a dream of heaven
 Around me like a golden halo fell !
Then the bright veil of fantasy was riven,
 And my lips murmured, “ Fare thee well ! —
 farewell ! ”

I dared not listen to thy words, nor turn
 To meet the mystic language of thine eyes,
I only *felt* their power, and in the urn
 Of memory, treasured their sweet rhapsodies.

We parted then, forever, — and the hours
 Of that bright day were gathered to the
 past, —
But, through long wintry nights, I heard the
 flowers
Sigh dreamily, “ We are the last ! — the
 last ! ”

September, 1849.

SONG.

I BADE thee stay. Too well I know
The fault was mine, — mine only :
I dared not think upon the past,
All desolate and lonely.

I feared in memory's silent air
Too sadly to regret thee, —
Feared in the night of my despair
I could not all forget thee.

Yet go, — ah, go ! those pleading eyes,
Those low, sweet tones, appealing
From heart to heart, — ah, dare I trust
That passionate revealing ?

For ah, those dark and pleading eyes
Evoke too keen a sorrow, —
A pang that will not pass away,
With thy wild vows, to-morrow.

A love immortal and divine
Within my heart is waking :
Its dream of anguish and despair
It owns not but in breaking.

WITHERED FLOWERS.

REMEMBRANCES of happiness ! to me
Ye bring sweet thoughts of the year's purple prime,
Wild, mingling melodies of bird and bee,
That pour on summer winds their silvery chime
Of balmy incense, burdening all the air,
From flowers that by the sunny garden wall
Bloomed at your side, nursed into beauty there
By dews and silent showers : but these to *all*
Ye bring. Oh ! sweeter far than these the spell
Shrined in those fairy urns for *me* alone ;
For me a charm sleeps in each honeyed cell,
Whose power can call back hours of rapture flown,
To the sad heart sweet memories restore,
Tones, looks, and words of love that may return no more.

THE PHANTOM VOICE.

*"It is a phantom voice :
Again! — again! how solemnly it falls
Into my heart of hearts!"*

SCENES FROM *Politian*.

THROUGH the solemn hush of midnight,
How sadly on my ear
Falls the echo of a harp whose tones
I never more may hear !

A wild, unearthly melody,
Whose monotone doth move
The saddest, sweetest cadences
Of sorrow and of love :

Till the burden of remembrance weighs
Like lead upon my heart,
And the shadow, on my soul that sleeps,
Will never more depart.

The ghastly moonlight, gliding
Like a phantom through the gloom,

How it fills with solemn fantasies
My solitary room !

And the sighing winds of Autumn,
Ah ! how sadly they repeat
That low, bewildering melody,
So mystically sweet !

I hear it softly murmuring
At midnight o'er the hill,
Or across the wide savannas,
When all beside is still.

I hear it in the moaning
Of the melancholy main ;
In the rushing of the night-wind,
The rhythm of the rain.

E'en the wild-flowers of the forest,
Waving sadly to and fro,
But whisper to my boding heart
The burden of its woe.

And the spectral moon, now paling
And fading, seems to say,
“ I leave thee to remembrances
That will not pass away.”

Ah, through all the solemn midnight,
How mournful 't is to hark
To the voices of the silence,
The whisper of the dark !

In vain I turn, some solace
From the distant stars to crave :
They are shining on thy sepulchre,
Are smiling on thy grave.

How I weary of their splendor !
All night long they seem to say,
“ We are lonely,— sad and lonely,—
Far away,— far, far away ! ”

Thus, through all the solemn midnight,
That phantom voice I hear,
As it echoes through the silence,
When no earthly sound is near.

And though dawn-light yields to noon-light,
And though darkness turns to day,
They but leave me to remembrances
That will not pass away.

November, 1849.

ARCTURUS.

WRITTEN IN OCTOBER.

“Our star looks through the storm.”

STAR of resplendent front ! thy glorious eye
Shines on me still from out yon clouded sky,—
Shines on me through the horrors of a night
More drear than ever fell o'er day so bright,—
Shines till the envious Serpent slinks away,
And pales and trembles at thy steadfast ray.

Hast thou not stooped from heaven, fair star !
to be
So near me in this hour of agony ?—
So near,— so bright,— so glorious, that I seem
To lie entranced as in some wondrous dream,—
All earthly joys forgot,— all earthly fear,
Purged in the light of thy resplendent sphere :
Kindling within my soul a pure desire
To blend with thine its incandescent fire,—
To lose my very life in thine, and be
Soul of thy soul through all eternity.

1849.

RESURGEMUS.

I MOURN thee not: no words can tell
The solemn calm that tranced my breast
When first I knew thy soul had past
From earth to its eternal rest;

For doubt and darkness, o'er thy head,
Forever waved their Condor wings;
And in their murky shadows bred
Forms of unutterable things;

And all around thy silent hearth,
The glory that once blushed and bloomed
Was but a dim-remembered dream
Of "the old time entombed."

Those melancholy eyes that seemed
To look beyond all time, or, turned
On eyes they loved, so softly beamed, —
How few their mystic language learned.

How few could read their depths, or know
The proud, high heart that dwelt alone
In gorgeous palaces of woe,
Like Eblis on his burning throne.

For ah ! no human heart could brook
The darkness of thy doom to share,
And not a living eye could look
Unscathed upon thy dread despair.

I mourn thee not : life had no lore
Thy soul in morphean dews to steep,
Love's lost nepenthe to restore,
Or bid the avenging sorrow sleep.

Yet, while the night of life shall last,
While the slow stars above me roll,
In the heart's solitudes I keep
A solemn vigil for thy soul.

I tread dim cloistral aisles, where all
Beneath are solemn-sounding graves ;
While o'er the oriel, like a pall,
A dark, funereal shadow waves.

There, kneeling by a lampless shrine,
Alone amid a place of tombs,

My erring spirit pleads for thine
Till light along the Orient blooms.

Oh, when thy faults are all forgiven,
The vigil of my life outwrought,
In some calm altitude of heaven,—
The dream of thy prophetic thought,—

Forever near thee, soul in soul,
Near thee forever, yet how far,
May our lives reach love's perfect goal
In the high order of thy star !

SONNETS.

I.

TO —.

VAINLY my heart had with thy sorceries striven :
It had no refuge from thy love, — no Heaven
But in thy fatal presence ; — from afar
It owned thy power and trembled like a star
O'erfraught with light and splendor. Could I
deem

How dark a shadow should obscure its beam ? —
Could I believe that pain could ever dwell
Where thy bright presence cast its blissful
spell ?

Thou wert my proud palladium ; — could I fear
The avenging Destinies when thou wert
near ? —

Thou wert my Destiny ; — thy song, thy fame,
The wild enchantments clustering round thy
name,

Were my soul's heritage, its royal dower ;
Its glory and its kingdom and its power !

II.

WHEN first I looked into thy glorious eyes,
And saw, with their unearthly beauty pained,
Heaven deepening within heaven, like the
skies
Of autumn nights without a shadow stained,
I stood as one whom some strange dream en-
thralls ;
For, far away, in some lost life divine,
Some land which every glorious dream recalls,
A spirit looked on me with eyes like thine.
E'en now, though death has veiled their starry
light,
And closed their lids in his relentless night —
As some strange dream, remembered in a
dream,
Again I see, in sleep, their tender beam ;
Unfading hopes their cloudless azure fill,
Heaven deepening within heaven, serene and
still.

III.

OFT since thine earthly eyes have closed on
mine,
Our souls, dim-wandering in the hall of
dreams,
Hold mystic converse on the life divine,
By the still music of immortal streams ;
And oft thy spirit tells how souls, affied
By sovran destinies, no more can part, —
How death and hell are powerless to divide
Souls whose deep lives lie folded heart in
heart.
And if, at times, some lingering shadow lies
Heavy upon my path, some haunting dread,
Then do I point thee to the harmonies
Of those calm heights whereto our souls
arise
Through suffering, — the faith that doth ap-
prove
In death the deathless power and divine life
of love.

IV.

WE met beneath September's gorgeous beams :
Long in my house of life thy star had
reigned ;
Its mournful splendor trembled through my
dreams,
Nor with the night's phantasmal glories
waned.

We wandered thoughtfully o'er golden meads
To a lone woodland, lit by starry flowers,
Where a wild, solitary pathway leads
Through mouldering sepulchres and cypress
bowers.

A dreamy sadness filled the autumnal air ; —
By a low, nameless grave I stood beside
thee,

My heart according to thy murmured prayer
The full, sweet answers that my lips denied
thee.

O mournful faith, on that dread altar sealed —
Sad dawn of love in realms of death revealed !

V.

ON our lone pathway bloomed no earthly
hopes :—

Sorrow and death were near us, as we stood
Where the dim forest, from the upland slopes,
Swept darkly to the sea. The enchanted
wood

Thrilled, as by some foreboding terror stirred ;
And as the waves broke on the lonely shore,
In their low monotone, methought I heard
A solemn voice that sighed, “ Ye meet no
more.”

There, while the level sunbeams seemed to
burn

Through the long aisles of red, autumnal
gloom,—

Where stately, storied cenotaphs inurn
Sweet human hopes, too fair on Earth to
bloom,—

Was the bud reaped, whose petals, pure and
cold,

Sleep on my heart till Heaven the flower un-
fold.

VI.

If thy sad heart, pining for human love,
In its earth solitude grew dark with fear,
Lest the high Sun of Heaven itself should
prove
Powerless to save from that phantasmal
sphere
Wherein thy spirit wandered — if the flowers
That pressed around thy feet, seemed but
to bloom
In lone Gethsemanes, through starless hours,
When all, who loved, had left thee to thy
doom : —
Oh, yet believe, that, in that hollow vale,
Where thy soul lingers, waiting to attain
So much of Heaven's sweet grace as shall avail
To lift its burden of remorseful pain, —
My soul shall meet thee and its Heaven forego
Till God's great love, on both, one hope, one
Heaven bestow.

ARCTURUS.

WRITTEN IN APRIL.

“ *Nec morti esse locum, sed viva volare
Sideris in numerum atque alto succedere cœlo.* ”
VIRGIL, *Geor.*, IV.

AGAIN, imperial star ! thy mystic beams
Pour their wild splendors on my waking
dreams,
Piercing the blue depths of the vernal night
With opal shafts and flames of ruby light ;
Filling the air with melodies, that come
Mournful and sweet, from the dark, sapphire
dome, —
Weird sounds, that make the cheek with won-
der pale,
As their wild symphonies o'ersweep the
gale.
For, in that gorgeous world, I fondly deem,
Dwells the freed soul of one whose earthly
dream

Was full of beauty, majesty and wo ;
 One who, in that pure realm of thine, doth
 grow
 Into a power serene, — a solemn joy,
 Undimmed by earthly sorrow or alloy ;
 Sphered far above the dread, phantasmal
 gloom, —
 The penal tortures of that living tomb
 Wherein his earth-life languished ; — who shall
 tell
 The drear enchantments of that Dantean hell !

“ Was it not Fate, whose earthly name is Sor-
 row,”
 That bade him, with prophetic soul, to borrow
 From all the stars that fleck night’s purple
 dome,
 Thee, bright Arcturus ! for his Eden home : —
 Was it not Fate, whose name in Heaven
 above,
 Is Truth and Goodness and unchanging
 Love, —
 Was it not Fate, that bade him turn to thee
 As the bright regent of his destiny ? —
 For when thine orb passed from the lengthen-
 ing gloom
 Of autumn nights, a morning-star to bloom

Beside Aurora's eastern gates of pearl,
He passed from earth, his weary wings to furl
In the cool vales of Heaven: thence, through
yon sea
Of starry isles, to hold his course to thee.

Now, when in April's cloudless nights, I turn
To where thy pharos mid the stars doth burn,—
A glorious cynosure,— I read in thee
The rune of Virgil's golden augury ;¹
And deem that o'er thy seas of silver calm
Floats the far perfume of the Eden palm.

¹ For there is no place of annihilation: but alive they mount up each into his own order of star, and take their high seat in the heavens. — *Georgics*, Book IV.

April, 1850.

TO THE MORNING-STAR.

“ Fair crescent star, upborne on waves of light,—
Bud of the morning, that must fade so soon.”

DALGONI.

SWEET Phosphor ! star of Love and Hope,
Again I see thy silver horn
Rise o'er the dark and dewy slope
Of yonder hills that hide the morn.

All night the glooming shadows lay
So thick on valley, wave, and wold,
I scarce could deem the buried day
Would ever pierce their shrouding fold :

Yet, even now, a line of light
Comes slowly surging o'er the dark ;
And lo ! thy crescent, floating bright
And buoyant as a fairy bark.

But ah, the solemn stars of night,—
The distant stars that long have set,—

How can I, in thy nearer light
Of love and hope, their smile forget? —

The stars that trembled through my dream,
That spoke in accents faint and far,
Can I forget their pensive beam,
For thine, my radiant morning-star?

No dawn-light in my soul can wake
One hope to make the world more fair;
No noon-tide ray illume the lake
Of dark remembrance, brooding there;

But Night comes down the paling west,
With mystic glories on her brow: —
She lays her cold hand on my breast,
And bids, for me, the lotus blow:

She bears me on her Lethean tides
To lands by living waters fed:
She lifts the cloudy veil that hides
The dim campagnas of the dead.

Down the long corridor of dreams,
She leads me silently away;
Till, through its shadowy portal, streams
The dawn of that diviner Day!

HOURS OF LIFE.

HOURS OF LIFE.

MORNING.

“Temp’ era dal principio del matino
E’l sol montava in su con quelle stelle
Ch’eran con lui quando l’Amor divino
Mosse da prima quelle cose belle ;
Si cha bene sperir mera cagione
L’ora del tempo e la dolce stagione.”

DANTE.

ERE youth with its auroral blooms
Dispels the tender twilight glooms
Of Infancy, while yet it lies
Close to the gates of Paradise,
No fears the guileless bosom thrill ;
The little stranger slumbers still,
O’ershadowed by the silent wings
Of angels, till the morning brings
Music and perfume, and around him flings
Her rosy mist-wreaths, drooping warm and low,
And prints her fragrant kisses on his brow.

Startled from out that dreamless rest,
Through mist-wreaths, drooping warm and
low,
I saw her faint smile in the east,
I felt her kisses on my brow.

From the high meadows, dewy-sweet,
Fair Eos with her silver feet
Chased the shadows as they crept
Under woodland boughs away,
Or down the airy uplands swept
Into hollows cool and gray,
Till her full refulgence, bright
As a perfect chrysolite,
Filled the solemn dome of Night !

With a sweet, indolent surprise,
Undimmed by haunting memories,
I saw the gradual glory rise.

Divinely calm and fancy-free
Were those morning hours to me ;
I recked not of the bitter root
That bears the paradisal fruit ;
I knew not that the serpent brood
Lurked in that Aidenn solitude ;

For childhood kept inviolate
The tenure of its fair estate,
Lulled in a murmurous monotone,
As when bees in violets drone.

Till gently as the spring-time showers
Wake the rose-buds into flowers,
Nature wrought her spells to lure
The child-heart from its clear-obscure,
Dazzling the bewildered sense
With dædalian opulence,
Protéan visions, sweet and strange,
And swift and subtle interchange
Of light with shadow, too intense
For the sweet calm of innocence :
Soon like the pure and priceless pearl
In Egypt's festal goblet tossed,
It vanished in the dizzy whirl
Of life's bewildering pleasures lost.

Wild hopes came fluttering round my heart
And swept its folded leaves apart,
As underneath those cloudless skies
I wandered with my Destinies,
Nor sought to read their silent eyes.

Thoughts for pain too dear — too deep
For pleasure — caused the heart to weep

Tears that, steeped in fragrance, fell
Like dew-drops from the lily's bell.

Dream followed dream : and still the day
Floated on golden wings away.

Then, while each little woodland bird
 One sweet note forever sung,
My heart on one bewildering word
 Its wealth of morning music flung :
All the glory and the gloom —
 All the passion and the power —
All the mystic bale and bloom
 Of its high imperial dower.

Like the sole phœnix in his perfumed nest,
Love reigned within my heart a sovran guest, —
Reigned in my heart of hearts — the thronèd
 lord
Of its young life, unquestioned and adored ;
Folding its fragrant altar-gifts in flame
 That made the summer heavens look wan
 and pale,
Forestalling life's fair heritage and claim
 On earthly hope till hope waxed cold and
 stale,
Bankrupt and blighted with the fond excess
Of a too rare and costly happiness,

A flame that earth's calm joys too proudly
spurned,
And left but ashes where its altars burned.

Yet, like the fabled Greek, superbly bold,
Who on Jove's awful countenance would gaze,
Pining immortal beauty to behold,

Consumed beneath the lightning of its rays,
My conscious heart a willing fate had sought,
Undaunted by the pangs its triumphs bought ;
Content love's mortal penalties to share,
And, for a dream so sweet, a dreadless doom
to dare.

I trod o'er meads of asphodel,
I walked the hall of dreams,
And gathered sweeter flowers than fell
By Enna's fabled streams.

Every wind of morning bore
Music from some haunted shore,
Some fairy island o'er the seas,
Inspired in Orient fantasies.

Every cloud that floated by
Veiled beneath its silver wing
Missives from a world more fair
Than the Poet's dream of spring.

I sought the holy wells of song
Love's wild enchantments to prolong,
And walked as in a waking trance
The wonder-land of old romance.

Sometimes to a triumph march
Throbbed the life-pulse, warm and high ;
Sometimes tolled in silver time
To a haunting melody,
Like a holy matin bell
Chiming in a far chapelle :
Now trembling to a cadence sweet
As the clear and silver beat
Of fairy footsteps, or the fall
Of fountains in a marble hall ;
Now as to an echoing horn,
Far through moonlit forests borne,
Sad and rhythmically slow,
Moved to grand adagio.

Dream followed dream : the horizon lay
A line of silver far away ;
The trees soared far into the blue,
The rose-cups dripped with morning dew,
And still the level life-path wound
Away, away, o'er flowery ground.

NOON.

“The mysterious silence of full noon.”

BAILEY. *Festus.*

“Combien de fois dans le silence de minuit, et dans cet autre silence de midi, si accablant, si inquiet, si dévorant, n'ai-je pas senti mon cœur se précipiter vers un but inconnu, vers un onhbeur sans forme et sans nom, qui est au ciel, qui est dans l'air, qui est partout, comme l'amour! C'est l'aspiration sainte de la partie la plus éthérée de notre âme vers l'inconnu.”

GEORGE SAND

DREAM followed dream; and still the day
Floated on golden wings away;

But in the hush of the high noon,
Touched by a sorrow without name,
Consumed by a slow fever-flame,

I loathed my life's mysterious boon,
Unconscious of its end or aim;

Lost in a languor of repose, —

A luxury of gloom, —
As when the curved, voluptuous rose
Droops with its wealth of bloom.

Decked as for a festival
Seemed the wide and lonely hall

Of Nature, but a mute despair
Filled the universal air ;—
A sense of loneliness and void, —
A wealth of beauty unenjoyed, —
A sadness born mid the excess
Of life's unvalued loveliness.

Every pulse of being panting
With a bliss it fain would share,
Still there seemed a presence wanting,
Still some lost ideal haunting
All the lone and lustrous air.

Far off I heard the solemn chimes
Of Life and Death, —
The rhythm of ancestral rhymes
Above, — beneath !

“Light in shadow ever fading, —
Death on Life's bright realm invading, —
Pain with pleasure keeping measure, —
Wasting care with golden treasure.
So the ancient burden rang,
So the choral voices sang.

Though beautiful on all the hills
The summer noonlight lay,

Far in the west a single cloud
Lay folded like a fleecy shroud,
 Ready to veil its ray.
And over all a purple pall
 Seemed waiting for the day.

I heard far, phantom voices calling
 Over all the flowery wold, —
O'er the westering meadows falling
 Into slopes of gleamy gold ; —

Still I heard them calling, — calling, —
 Through the dim, entangled glooms, —
Far through sunless valleys falling
 Downward to a place of tombs.

Near me pressed a vassal throng,
Slaves to custom, serfs to wrong —
Hollow-hearted, vain and cold,
Minions of the earthly mold ;
Holding in supreme derision
Memories of the life Elysian,
Reckless of the birthright lost,
Heedless of the heavenly host,
Traitors to the Holy Ghost !

Haunted by a nameless terror, —
Thrilled by a foreboding breath,
As the aspen wildly trembles
When the winds are still as death, —
I sought amid the sadness drear
Some loved familiar face to cheer
The solitude, — some lingering tone
Of love ere love and hope had flown.

I heard a low voice breathe my name:
Was it the echo of my own, —
That weird and melancholy tone, —
That voice whose subtle sweetness came
Keen as the serpent's tongue of flame?
So near, its music seemed to me
The music of my heart to be.

Still I heard it, nearer, clearer,
When all other songs had flown,
Floating round me till it bound me
In a wild world of its own.

Suddenly a chill wind leapt
Through its woven harmonies ;
All its silver chords were snapt
As a wind-harp's by the breeze.

A shudder through the silence crept
And death athwart the noonlight swept.

Then came the pall, the dirge, the knell,
As, dust to dust, the earth-clods fell,
Down crumbling on a coffin lid,
Within whose narrow casket hid, —
Shut from the cheerful light of day, —
Buried, yet quick, my own heart lay.

Graves closed round my path of life,
The beautiful had fled ;
Pale shadows wandered by my side,
And whispered of the dead.
The far off hollow of the sky
Seemed like an idle mockery. —
The vaulted hollow of the sky,
With its blue depths of mystery
But rounded Death's vast empery.

O'erwearied with life's restless change
From ecstacy to agony,
Its fleeting pleasures born to die,
The mirage of its fantasy,
Its worn and melancholy range
Of hopes that could no more estrange
The married heart of memory,

Doomed, while we drain life's perfumed wine,
For the dull Lethean wave to pine,
And, for each thrill of joy, to know
Despair's slow pulse or sorrow's throe,—
I sought some central truth to span

These wide extremes of good and ill,—
I longed with one bold glance to scan

Life's perfect sphere, to rend at will
The gloom of Erebus, — dread zone,
Coiled like a serpent round the throne
Of Heaven, — the realm where Justice veils
Her heart and holds her even scales, —
Where awful Nemesis awaits
The doomed, by Pluto's iron gates.

• In the long noon-tide of my sorrow,
I questioned of the eternal morrow ;
 I gazed in sullen awe
Far through the illimitable gloom
Down-deepening like the swift maelstrom,
 The doubting soul to draw
Into eternal solitudes,
Where unrelenting silence broods
 Around the throne of Law.

I questioned the dim chronicle
Of ages gone before, —

I listened for the triumph songs
That rang from shore to shore,
Where the heroes and the conquerors
wrought
The mighty deeds of yore,—
Where the foot-prints of the martyrs
Had bathed the earth in gore,
And the war-horns of the warriors
Were heard from shore to shore.

Their blood on desert plains was shed,—
Their voices on the wind had fled,—
They were the drear and shadowy DEAD!

Still, through the storied past, I sought
An answer to my sleepless thought ;
In the cloisters old and hoary
Of the mediæval time—
In the rude ancestral story
Of the ancient Runic rhyme.

I paused on Grecian plains, to trace
Some remnant of a mightier race,
Serene in sorrow and in strife,
Calm conquerors of Death and Life,
Types of the god-like forms that shone
Upon the sculptured Parthenon.

But still, as when Prometheus bare
From heaven the fiery dart,
I saw the “vulture passions” tear
The proud Caucasian heart,¹—
The war of destiny with will
Still conquered, yet conflicting still.

I heard loud Hallelujahs
From Israel’s golden lyre,
And I sought their great Jehovah
In the cloud and in the fire.
I lingered by the stream that flowed
“Fast by the oracle of God,”—
I bowed, its sacred wave to sip;—
Its waters fled my thirsting lip.
The serpent trail was over all
Its borders,—and its palms that threw
Aloft their waving coronal,
Were blistered by a poison dew.

Serener elements I sought,
Sublimer altitudes of thought,

¹ Gustav Klemm, in a work entitled *Allgemeine Culturgeschichte der Menschheit*, divides the human races into the active and passive: the former (embracing only the so-called Caucasian race) marked by restless activity and aspiration, progress and the spirit of doubt and inquiry; the latter (comprising all the remaining races), by an absence or inferiority of these characteristics.

The truth Saint John and Plato saw,
The mystic light, the inward law ;
The Logos ever found and lost,
The aureola of the Ghost.

I hailed its faint auroral beam
In many a Poet's Delphic dream,—
On many a shrine where faith's pure flame
Through fable's gorgeous oriel came.

Around the altars of the god,
In holy passion hushed, I trod,
Where once the mighty voice of Jove
Rang through Dodona's haunted grove.
No more the dove with sable plumes¹
Swept through the forest's gorgeous glooms ;
The shrines were desolate and cold,
Their pæans hushed, their story told,
In long, inglorious silence lost,
Like fiery tongues of Pentecost.

No more did music's golden surge
The mortal in immortal merge :

¹ "The priestesses of Dodona assert that two black pigeons flew from Thebes in Egypt ; one of which settled in Lybia, the other among themselves : which latter, resting on a beech-tree, declared with a human voice that here was to be the oracle of Jove." — HERODOTUS, Book II. ch. 55.

High canticles of joy and praise
 Died with the dream of other days ;
 I only heard the Mænad's wail, —
 That shriek that made the orient pale :
 Evohe ! — ah — Evohe !
 The mystic burden of a woe
 Whose dark enigma none may know ;¹
 The primal curse, — the primal throe.

Evohe ! — ah — Evohe !
 Nature shuddered at the cry
 Of that ancient agony !

Still the fabled Python bound me, —
 Still the serpent coil inwound me, —
 Still I heard the Mænad's cry,
 Evohe ! — ah — Evohe !

¹ “The Mænads, in their wild incantations, carried serpents in their hands, and with frantic gestures cried out Eva ! Eva ! Epiphanius thinks that this invocation related to the mother of mankind ; but I am inclined to believe that it was the word Ephæ or Ophæ, rendered by the Greeks, Ophis, *a serpent*. I take Abaddon to have been the name of the same ophite God whose worship has so long infected the world. The learned Heinsius makes Abaddon the same as the serpent Python.” — JACOB BRYANT'S *Analysis of Ancient Mythology*.

“While Mænads cry aloud Evoe, Evoe !
 That voice that is contagion to the world.”

SHELLEY'S *Prometheus*.

Where the Nile pours his sullen wave
Through tombs and empires of the grave,
I sought, 'mid cenotaphs, to find
The earlier miracles of mind :
Alas, beside the funeral urn
How drearily the death-lights burn ;
On dim Denderah's sculptured lore
 How sad the noonlight falls,
How mournfully the west wind sighs
 Through Karnak's moldering halls !
No tongue shall tell their wondrous tale,
No hand shall lift the Isis veil ;
The mighty pyramids that rise
So drear along the morning skies,
Guard well the secrets of the dead,
Nor break the sleep of ages fled.

Their awful shadow passed, I stood
On India's burning solitude ;
Where, in the misty morning of the world,
Life lay as in a dream of beauty furled.

I saw the mighty altars of the Sun,—
Before whose fires the star-gods, one by one,
Paled like thin ghosts,—in lurid splendors
 rife ;
I heard the Persian hail him Lord of Life !

I saw his altar-flames rise wild and high,
Veiling the glory of the noon-day sky,
Hiding the holy heavens with their ensanguined dye.

I turned, and from the Brahmin's milder law
I sought truth's mystic element to draw,
Pure as it sparkled in the cup of Heaven,—
The bright Amreeta to the immortals given,—
To bathe my soul in fontal springs, that lie
Veiled from the careless and incurious eye.

Half wakened from the brooding sleep
Of Nature ere she felt the leap
Of sentient life, the Hindoo seemed
Sad as the faith his fathers dreamed ;
Like his own rock-hewn temples, wrought
From some obscure and shadowy thought
Of ancient days, — some formless dread,
In the gray dawn of ages bred, —
Prone on his native earth reclined,
To endless reveries resigned,
His dull soul lapsing on the Lethean stream,
Lost in the dim world of a lotus dream.

Still, still the eternal mystery,
The shadow of the poison-tree

Of Good and Evil haunted me.
In Religion's holy name,
Furies fed her altar-flame,
Sophists gloried in her shame.
Still the ancient mythus bound me,
Still the serpent coil inwound me,
Still I heard the Mænad's cry,
Evohe! — ah — Evohe!

Wearied with man's discordant creed,
I sought on Nature's page to read
Life's history, ere yet she shrined
Her essence in the incarnate mind ;
Intent her secret laws to trace
In primal solitudes of space,
From her first, faint atomic throes,
To where her orbèd splendor glows
In the vast, silent spheres that roll
Forever towards their unknown goal.

I turned from dull alchemic lore
With starry Chaldeans to soar,
And sought, on fancy's wing, to roam
That glorious galaxy of light
Where mingling stars, like drifting foam,
Melt on the solemn shores of night ;

But still the surging glory chased
The dark through night's chaotic waste ;
And still, within its deepening voids,
Crumbled the burning asteroids.

Long gloating on that hollow gloom,
Methought that in some vast maelstrom,
The stars were hurrying to their doom,—
Bubbles upon life's boundless sea,
Swift meteors of eternity,
Pale sparks of mystic fire, that fall
From God's unwaning coronal.

Is there, I asked, a living woe
In all those burning orbs that glow
Through the blue ether ? — do they share
Our dim world's anguish and despair ?
In their vast orbits do they fly
From some avenging destiny, —
And shall their wild eyes pale beneath
The dread anathema of Death ? —
Our own fair Earth, — shall she too drift,
Forever shrouded in a weft
Of stormy clouds, that surge and swirl
Around her in her dizzy whirl : —
Forever shall a shadow fall
Backward from her golden wall,

Its dark cone stretching, ghast and gray,
Into outer glooms away?—

From the sad, unsated quest
Of knowledge, how I longed to rest
On her green and silent breast!

I languished for the dews of death
My fevered heart to steep,—
The heavy, honey-dews of death,
The calm and dreamless sleep.

I left my fruitless lore apart,
And leaned my ear on Nature's heart,
To hear, far from life's busy throng,
The chime of her sweet undersong.

She pressed her balmy lips to mine,
She bathed me in her sylvan springs;
And still, by many a rural shrine,
She taught me sweet and holy things.
I felt her breath my temples fan,
I learned her temperate laws to scan,
My soul, of hers, became a conscious part;
Her beauty melted through my inmost heart.

Still I languished for the word
Her sweet lips had never spoken,
Still, from the pale shadow-land,
There came nor voice nor token ;
No accent of the Holy Ghost
Whispered of the loved and lost ;
No bright wanderer came to tell
If, in worlds beyond the grave,
Life, love, and beauty dwell.

EVENING.

"And, it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light."

ZECHARIAH xiv. 7.

"All the dawn promised shall the day fulfill,
The glory and the grandeur of each dream ;
And every prophecy shall be achieved,
And every joy conceded, prove a pledge
Of some new joy to come."

ROBERT BROWNING.

WILDER and lonelier grew the day :
The vault of heaven once so high, —
Fading to infinity, —
Now bowed by its own weight of gloom,
Seemed dark and low-browed as a tomb.
Cold, sculptured hills, forlorn and gray,
Like sun-forsaken Memnons, lay
Around my drear and pathless way.
The thunder rolled ; and loud and shrill
The storm-blast shrieked from hill to hill.

Beside the lamp within the veil
Of the soul's temple burning pale,

I sought, in self-renouncing prayer,
Truth's guarded secrets to forbear,
Till lowly trust the right should earn
Life's golden meanings to discern.
I sought in ministries of love
The purchase of the Cross to prove,—
The mysteries of the Holy Rood
In sorrow's pale beatitude.
Content, through lowering clouds, to greet
The glory of the Paraclete ;
I sought, within the inner shrine,
The Father-God of Palestine.

A holy light began to stream
Athwart the cloud-rifts, like a dream
Of Heaven ; and lo ! a pale, sweet face,
Of mournful grandeur and imperial grace,—
A face whose mystic sadness seemed to borrow
Immortal beauty from that mortal sorrow
Looked on me ; and a voice of solemn cheer
Uttered its sweet evangelgs on my ear ;
The open secrets of that eldest lore
That seems less to reveal than to restore.

“ Pluck thou the Life-tree's golden fruit,
Nor seek to bare its sacred root :
Live, and in life's perennial faith
Renounce the heresy of death :

Believe, and every sweet accord
Of being, to thine ear restored,
Shall sound articulate and clear ;
Perfected love shall banish fear,
Knowledge and wisdom shall approve
The divine synthesis of love.”

“ Royally the lilies grow
On the grassy leas,
Basking in the sun and dew,
Swinging in the breeze.
Doth the wild-fowl need a chart
Through the illimitable air ?
Heaven lies folded in thy heart ;
Seek the truth that slumbers there ;
Thou art Truth’s eternal heir.”

“ Let the shadows come and go ;
Let the stormy north wind blow :
Death’s dark valley cannot bind thee
In its dread abode ;
There the Morning Star shall find thee,
There the living God.
Sin and sorrow cannot hide thee,—
Death and hell cannot divide thee
From the love of God.”

In the mystic agony
On the Mount of Calvary,
The Saviour with his dying eyes
Beheld the groves of Paradise.

“Then weep not by the charnel stone,
Nor veil thine eyelids from the sun.
Upward, through the death-dark glides
The spirit on resurgent tides
Of light and glory on its way :
Wilt thou by the cerements stay ? —
Thou the risen Christ shalt see
In redeemed Humanity.
Though mourners at the portal wept,
And angels lingered where it slept,
The soul but tarried for a night,
Then plumed its wings for loftier flight.”

“Is thy heart so lonely ? — Lo,
Ready to share thy joy and woe,
Poor wanderers tarry at thy gate,
The way-worn and the desolate ;
And angels at thy threshold wait :
Wouldst thou love’s holiest guerdon win ?
Arise, and let the stranger in.”

“The friend whom not thy fickle will,
 But the deep heart within thee, still
 Yearneth to fold to its embrace,
 Shall seek thee through the realms of space.
 Keep the image Nature sealed
 On thy heart, by love annealed,
 Keep thy faith serene and pure ;
 Her royal promises are sure,
 Her sweet betrothals shall endure.”

“Hope thou all things, and believe ;
 And, in child-like trust, achieve
 The simplest mandates of the soul,
 The simplest good, the nearest goal ;
 Move but the waters, and their pulse
 The broad ocean shall convulse.”

“When love shall reconcile the will
 Love’s mystic sorrow to fulfill,
 Its fiery baptism to share, —
 The burden of its cross to bear, —
 Earth shall to equilibrium tend,
 Ellipses shall to circles bend,
 And life’s long agony shall end.”

“Then pluck the Life-tree’s golden fruit ;
 No blight can reach its sacred root.

E'en though every blossom fell
Into Hades, one by one,
Love is deeper far than Hades,—
Shadows cannot quench the sun."

"Can the child-heart promise more
Than the Father hath in store?—
The blind shall see,— the dead shall live;
Can the man-child forfeit more
Than the Father can forgive?
The Dragon, from his empire driven,
No more shall find his place in Heaven,
Till e'en the Serpent power approve
The divine potency of love."

"Guard thy faith with holy care,—
Mystic virtues slumber there;
'T is the lamp within the soul
Holding genii in control:
Faith shall walk the stormy water,—
In the unequal strife prevail,—
Nor, when comes the dread avatar,
From its fiery splendors quail.
Faith shall triumph o'er the grave,
Love shall bless the life it gave."

I heard; and in my heart the incarnate Word
Uttered, serene and clear, its sweet accord,—

To Him that sitteth on the eternal throne,
All power and grace earth's discord to
atone,—

To the great Soul that foldeth all in one,
Father in Heaven, I cried, thy will be done!

Then faintly, with my heart's low music blending,

I heard a sound of silver wings descending :
The Holy Dove of Peace, the promised guest,
Folded its fragrant pinions on my breast.

Life into lines of beauty flowed
Around me, flexuous and free ;
The passive face of Nature showed
A sweet, responsive sympathy ;
And dimly, through the Human, glowed
The lineaments of Deity.

I saw the frowning orbs of Fate
Into a regent calm dilate —
A sovran and superb disdain
Of earth's fast-fleeting joy and pain ;
While patience budding into peace,
And knowledge ripening into power,
And thought with its pale alchemy,
Made beautiful the passing hour ;

Till morn and noonlight seemed to fuse
Their glory with its fading hues,
As the fair outline of my day,
From dawn to twilight's golden gray,
Rose grandly on the prescient soul,
Crowned with the sunset's aureole.

Far off, among the Norland hills,
The distant thunders rolled ;
Soft rain-clouds dipped their fringes down
Across the evening gold.
Heaven's stormy dome was rent, and high
Above me shone the summer sky ;
Ever more serene it grew,
Fading off into the blue,
Till the boundless hyaline
Seemed melting into depths divine,
And the angels came and went
Through the opening firmament.
In all the glooming hollows lay
A light more beautiful than day ;
All the blossom bells waved slowly
In the evening's golden calm,
And the hum of distant voices
Sounded like a vesper psalm.

Till dimly seen, through day's departing bloom,
The far-off lamps of heaven began to fling
Their trembling beams athwart the dewy
gloom,
As Evening, on the horizon's airy ring,
Winnowing the darkness with her silver wing,
Descended like an angel, calm and still.

ADDITIONAL POEMS.

SONNETS.

TO ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

I.

“O perpetui fiori
Dell’ eterna letizia !”

IL PARADISO.

FAIR Sibyl, sitting in thy “House of Clouds,”
Shrined, like some solitary star, above
The dull, cold shadow that our earth enshrouds,
How oft my spirit looks to thee in love !
To thy “Lost Bower” how oft in dreams re-
turning,
I see thee standing in the sylvan room,—
See the red sun-light in the rose-cups burning,
And the sweet blue-bells nodding through
the gloom :
Again I hear thy grand and solemn dirges
To the dim “Gods of Hellas,” like the breeze
O’er lone savannas sighing, or the surges
That wash the sands of solitary seas ;
Then, in calm waves of glory, swells the strain,
“Christ from the dead hath risen and shall
reign !”

II.

“ Ad una vista
D'un gran palazzo Michol ammirava
Si come donna dispettosa e trista.”

IL PURGATORIO.

SOMETIMES I see thee, pale with scorn and sorrow,

At a great palace window, looking forth,
To-day on plumèd Florentines, — to-morrow

Upon the hireling legions of the North :

Sometimes o'er little children bending lowly,

To hear their cry, in the dark factories
drowned ;

Ah, then thy pitying brow grows sweet and holy,

With a saint's aureole of sorrow crowned !

But most I love thee when that mystic glory —

Kindling at horrors that abhor the day —
Sheds a wild, stormy splendor o'er the story

Of the dark fugitive, who turned away

To death's cold threshold, calm in death's disdain,

From the “White Pilgrim's Rock,” beside
the western main.

III.

“Or descendiamo omai a maggior pieta.”
L’INFERNO.

Ay, most I love thee when thy starry song
Stoops to the plague-spot that we dare not
name,
And bares with burning breath the envenomed
wrong —
Our country’s dark inheritance of shame.
When our blaspheming synods look thereon,
Stifling God’s law and Nature’s noble ires
With the cold ashes of dead council-fires,
That Gorgon terror chills them into stone.
Yet while they cringe and palter, thy true
heart,
Serene in love’s own light and woman’s ruth,
Loyal to God and to God’s living truth,
Hath uttered words whose fulgent rays shall
dart
Like sunbeams through our land’s Tartarean
gloom,
Till freedom’s holy law its Stygian depths il-
lume.

TO PERDITA.

WHAT holds thy dreamy eyes in thrall ?
A sombre picture on the wall ;¹
A sombre picture, weird and cold,
That dims the daylight's morning gold.

A grass-grown rampart, lifting high
Its reedy fringe against the sky ;
Half lost in its o'ershadowing gloom,
The semblance of a moldering tomb ;
Upon the tablet, side by side,
In pomp of old heraldic pride,
Two sculptured figures lying stark
And dumb within the glimmering dark ;
A raven on the moldering tomb ;
An owlet flitting through the gloom ;
A cold, white, wandering moon, that seems
The ghost of long-forgotten dreams ;
In the high rampart an old door,
Where night winds enter : nothing more.

¹ Midnight. By G. H. Boughton.

Why doth it hold thine eyes in thrall,
This sombre picture on the wall,
That dims the daylight's glad return,
And shrineth darkness like an urn ?

Is there within thy heart a grave
O'er which the winds of memory wave,
Where, sepulchred in marble pride,
Thy dead hopes slumber, side by side,
Lost to the future's dawning light,
And shrined in immemorial night ?

Ah ! never hope of thine shall sleep
Within oblivion's donjon-keep.
Thy dreams were born to soar afar
Beyond the morning's purple star ;
Thy loyal heart shall re-create
From loss and wrong a loftier fate ;
Thy own deep heart of love illume
Thy life with love's immortal bloom.
On thy white brow, absolved from blame,
A shining stone, with a new name,
Shall flood the dark with living flame ;
Thy life, a perfume and a prayer,
With mystic fragrance fill the air,
And all thy buried hopes shall rise
Transfigured into destinies.

A PANSY FROM THE GRAVE OF KEATS.

• “That’s for thoughts!”—SHAKESPEARE.

THREE velvet petals darkly spread
In sumptuous sorrow for the dead,
Superbly sombre as a pall
Wrought for an elfin funeral ;
Two, hued like wings of silver light
Unfurled for Psyche’s heavenward flight ;
And every petal, o’er and o’er,
All legended with faery lore,
A palimpsest of fables old
And mythic stories manifold.

Endymion in enchanted swoon
Tranced by the melancholy moon ;
And, hovering near, the crescent-crowned
Diana, with her sylvan hound ;—
The virgin huntress, proud and pale,
Betrayed to passion’s blissful bale,
Till all her beautiful disdain
Is lost in love’s imperial pain.

Sad, star-eyed Lamia's serpent spell,
And the wild dirge of Isabel.

Hyperion in his palace bright,
Bastioned with pyramids of light,
Kindling the dawn with fiery breath,
Battling with Darkness and with Death,—
The pregnant fable left half told,—
A fading blush of morning gold.

The story of St. Agnes' Eve,
The tale where legioned fairies weave
Their spells within the moonlit gloom
Of Madeline's enchanted room.
The casement, triple-arched and high,
Enwrought with antique tracery,—

The blazoned window's gorgeous panes
That blush with old heraldic stains ;
The broidered kirtle on the floor,
The jeweled casket's gleaming store ;
The chamber, silken, hushed and chill,
Where Madeline lies dreaming still,
Lost in the lap of legends old,
And curtained from the moonlight cold,
Till, lowly kneeling at her side,
The minstrel-lover woos his bride.

I hear afar the wassail roar
Surge through the distant corridor,
As through the ancient, bannered halls
The midnight music swells and falls ;
The castle lamps are all aglow ;
The silver-snarling trumpets blow.
'T was ages, ages long ago,
The vigil of St. Agnes' Night,
The ruse, the revel, and the flight ;
But, till love's faery lore be past,
The charm of Agnes' Eve shall last.

The poet sleeps, and pansies bloom
Beside his far Italian tomb ;
The turf is heaped above his bed ;
The stone is moldering at his head ;
But each fair creature of his dream,
Transferred to daylight's common beam,
Lives the charmed life that waneth never,
A Beauty and a Joy forever.

APPLE-BLOOMS.

TO CARRIE, BY HER COUSIN.

You had been robbing apple-trees, —
Robbing rosy apple-trees, —
Stealing from the honey-bees

Stores of sweetness, while I lay,
In the twilight's tender gray,
Dreaming of orchards far away, —

Pale orchard blooms that fell like rain
Upon a far-off phantom plain, —
Dear days that would not dawn again,

And May-moons that would rise no more :
When softly through the open door
A cloud of perfume seemed to pour,

And then I saw two faces loom
Through tufts of pearly apple-bloom,
Filling with rose-light all the room, —

Two fair young faces, smiling through
The pink-white blossoms, and I knew
The May-queen's messengers in you.

I knew the orchard slopes were fair,—
I knew the winds that lingered there
O'er-swept them with enchanted air !

I saw the branches toss and swing,
Heard the bee's elfin bugle ring,
And owned the presence of the Spring.

May, 1860.

NIGHT WANES.

NIGHT wanes : the nation's travail, throe by
throe,

Brings on the hour that shall absolve her
sin ;

And the great, solemn bells, now swinging slow,
With tales of murder in their iron din,
Shall ring the years of peace and freedom
in.

Be patient, O my heart ; look through the
gloom

Of the sad present, look through all the past,
And learn how, out of sin and death and
doom,

And mournful tragedies, august and vast,
The world's great victories are achieved at
last.

Look far away ; count all the triumphs bought
By martyred saints, found worthy to atone
For others' sin, see life from death outwrought,
And know each blast from War's wild bugle
blown
Shall melt in music round the "Great White
Throne."

NIGHT AND STORM.

I SAW the waning August moon
Rise o'er the rocky shore,
And on a sad and stormy sea
Its lurid crimson pour.

My window opened to the east,
And far and far away,
I saw the headlong billows breast
The breakers of the bay.

The broad red sea seemed like a field
Where charging squadrons go :
I heard the clang of spear and shield,
I heard the clarions blow.

Near me the dancers' flying feet,
With sounds of harp and horn,
And wild waltz-music, madly sweet,
Were on the night-winds borne.

Rich voices lingered on the ear,
And laughter floated by,

And many a call of merry cheer,
And many a glad reply.

I only watched the trampling feet
Of waves upon the shore ;
I only heard their war-drums beat,
Their plunging batteries roar.

I thought on many a bannered plain,
On battles lost and won,
On homes bereft and heroes slain,
And armies marching on.

The wild waltz-music died away,
The laughter and the glee,
But all night long a stormy song
Seemed sounding from the sea :

A wail of trumpets in the air,
A dead march on the wave,
Wild tones of triumph or despair
O'er all our martyred brave.

I hailed Jehovah's fiery sword
In battles lost and won ;
I hailed the armies of the Lord
And heard them marching on.

OCEAN HOUSE, Cape Elizabeth, *August, 1863.*

DON ISLE.

Cromwell's siege of the sea-girt castle and fortress of Don Isle, which was heroically defended by a female descendant of Nicholas Le Poer, Baron of Don Isle, is, as represented by Sir Bernard Burke in his Romance of Irish History, full of legendary interest.

LONELY beneath the silent stars
It stands, a gray and moldering pile,
Wreck'd in the wild Cromwellian wars,
The sea-girt castle of Don Isle.
The wild waves beat the castle wall,
And bathe the rock with ceaseless showers;
Dark heaving billows plunge and fall
In whitening foam beneath the towers.

High beetling o'er the headland's brow
All seam'd and battle-scarr'd it stands,
And rents and gaping ruins show
The ravage of the spoiler's hands.
Two hundred years have rolled away,
And still, at twilight's haunted hour,
A ghostly lady seems to stray
By ruined barbacan and tower.

Dauntless within her lone domain
She held at bay her father's foe,
Till faithless followers fired the train
That laid her feudal fortress low.
Afar her exiled kinsmen roam ;
She perished in the smoldering pile,
The last of all her house and home,
The lonely lady of Don Isle.

The gray moss gathers on the wall,
And slow beneath the silent stars
The crumbling turrets waste and fall
Wrecked in the wild Cromwellian wars :
And peasants round their evening fire
With many a tale the hours beguile,
Of warrior ghosts and spectres dire
That haunt the castle of Don Isle.

NIGHTFALL ON THE SEACONNET SHORE.

To R. D. S.

We sat together, you and I,
And watched the daylight's dying bloom,
And saw the great white ships go by,
Like phantoms through the gathering gloom.

Like phantom lights the lonely stars
Looked through the sea-fog's ghastly veil,
Beyond the headland's rocky bars
We heard the stormy surges wail.

We sat together, hand in hand,
Upon the lonely, sea-girt wall,
And watched along the glimmering strand,
The wild, white breakers plunge and fall.

You spoke of pleasures past away,
Of hopes that left the heart forlorn,
Of life's unrest and love's decay,
And lonely sorrows proudly borne.

The sea's phantasmal sceneries
Commingled with your mournful theme;
The splendors of your starry eyes
Were drowned in memory's deepening
dream.

Darker and lonelier grew the night
Along the horizon's dreary verge,
And lonelier through the lessening light
Sang the wild sea-wind's wailing dirge.

When, kindling through the gathering gloom,
Beyond West-Island's beetling brow,
Where breakers dash, and surges boom,
We saw Point Judith's fires aglow.

Piercing night's solemn mystery,
The light-house reared its lonely form,
Serene above the weltering sea
And guardant through the gathering storm.

So, o'er the sea of life's unrest,
Through grief's wild storm, and sorrow's
gloom,
Faith's heavenly pharos in the breast
Lights up the dark with deathless bloom.

The sea-born sadness of the hour
Melted beneath its holy spell ;
Faith blossomed into perfect flower,
And our hearts whispered, " All is well."

1864.

TO "SHIRLEY:"

The good Santa Claus who sent me David Gray's Poems.

DEAR Santa Claus, your reindeer hoof
Fell soft as snow-flakes on the roof
That spanned my hall of dreams last night,
And when I woke, the morning light
Was lovelier, and the wintry day
More fair for you and David Gray :
His summer moons, his autumn nights,
The glamour of his sunset lights,
His red dawns and their rosy glow
On the white wonder of the snow ;
The sadness of his poet-soul
That looked beyond life's mortal goal,
For the great glory that should pour,
Through golden death's immortal door.

Entranced I lie the livelong day,
Dreaming of you and David Gray, —
Dreaming I see the daylight fade
Across the castled palisade

Of sunset clouds ; it dies and dies
Into diviner harmonies.
Sweet, haunting faces light the gloom
Of twilight in my lonely room,—
Proud poet-faces, sad and stern,
To whom earth gave a marble urn
That could nor life nor love restore :
This, "only this, and nothing more!"

The page grows dim, and solemn night,
Drops her rich curtain o'er the light,
Till, fold on fold, its dusky fall
Shuts out the far horizon wall :
The stars begin to glint and spark
Across the purple of the dark,
And all the happy winter day,
Made fair through you and David Gray,
Melts in a heavenly dream away !

December 25, 1865.

PROSERPINE TO PLUTO IN HADES.

“Nec repetita sequi curet Proserpina matrem.”

VIRGIL, *Georg.* I. 39.

I THINK on thee amid these spring-time flowers,
 On thee, my emperor, my sovran lord,
Dwelling alone in dim Tartarean towers
 Of thy dark realm, by earth and heaven ab-
 horred,
Wandering afar by that Avernian river
Where dead kings walk and phantoms wail for-
 ever.

I think on thee in that stern palace regnant,
 Where no sweet voice of summer charms the
air,
Where the vast solitude seems ever pregnant
 With some wild dream of unforetold despair.
Thy love, remembered, doth heaven's light
 eclipse ;
I feel thy lingering kisses on my lips.

I languish for the late autumnal showers,
The cool, cool plashing of the autumn rain,
The shimmering hoar-frost and fast-fading flow-
ers,

That give me back to thy dark realm again :
To thee I 'll bring Sicilia's starry skies
And all the heaven of summer in my eyes.

When from earth's noontide beauty borne away
To the pale prairies of that under world,
A mournful flower upon thy breast I lay
Till round thy heart its clinging tendrils
curled —
A frightened dove, that tamed its fluttering pin-
ion
To the dear magic of thy love's dominion.

For thou wert grandly beautiful as night,
Stern Orcus, in thy realm of buried kings ;
And thy sad crown of cypress in my sight
Fairer than all the bright and flowery rings
Of wreathèd poppies and of golden corn
By Ceres on her stately temples worn.

I sat beside thee on Hell's dusky throne,
Nor feared the awful shadow of thy fate ;
Content to share the burden of thy crown,
And all the mournful splendors of thy state ;

Bending my flower-like beauty to thy will,
Seeking with light thy lonely dark to fill.

Wondering, I think how thy dear love hath
bound me

In a new life that half forgets the old ;
All day I haunt the meadows where you found
me,

Knee-deep in daffodils of dusky gold,
Or sit by Cyane's sad fountain, dreaming
Of the red lake by thy proud palace gleaming.

When, in her car by wingèd dragons borne,
Pale Ceres sought me through the shudder-
ing night,

With angry torches and fierce eyes, forlorn,
Slaying the dark that screened me from her
sight,

Like a reft lioness that rends the air
Of midnight with her perilous despair,

Jove, pitying the great passion of her woe,
Gave back thy queen-bride to the mother's
grief —

To Ceres gave — through summer's golden
glow

And all the crescent months, from spear to
sheaf :

Alas, how sadly in Sicilian bowers
I pass this lonely, lingering time of flowers !

In the long silence of the languid noons,
When all the panting birds are faint with
heat,
I wander listless by the blue lagoons
To hear their light waves rippling at my feet
Through the dead calm, and count the linger-
ing time
By the slow pulsing of their silver chime.

I languish for the late autumnal showers,
The cool, cool plashing of the autumn rain,
The shimmering hoar-frost and fast-fading
flowers,
That give me back to thy dark realm again :
I have no native land from thee apart,
And my high heaven of heavens is in thy heart.

THE TYPHON.

“Typhon, dread demon from the realms below,
The dark, mysterious cause of every woe,
The racking ague and the fever thro’! ”

WHEN the green leaves to golden bronze were
turning,

And earth lay parched beneath the Octo-
ber sun,

A sullen fever in my veins was burning,
While life and death seemed melting into
one.

At eventide the cheerful embers glowing
Through the cool chamber turned to fires
of doom ;

In the white draperies o’er the windows flow-
ing

Lurked sheeted phantoms from the nether
gloom.

Great, gorgon heads and stony faces only
Looked out from all the pictures on the
wall ;

The quaint sequestered room grew vast and
lonely
As the wide vaulted arch of Vathek's hall;

The walls, now fading into endless distance,
Now narrowing round me to a low-browed
cave,
Where in a living death without resistance
I lay as in the hollow of a grave.

Strange life in death! that left my soul to
wander
Long ages in a dim sepulchral pile,
The legend of forgotten lives to ponder
On footworn marbles of the moldering aisle.

My vanished years were there — a long suc-
cession
Of sultry summers severed by the snows
Of endless winters, while some dark obsession
Forced me to read the record to its close.

Day followed day and night to night succeeded,
And still the powers of darkness reigned
supreme;
A smoldering fire the pulse of life impeded,
And all my past seemed one long fever
dream.

Then the foul Typhon fled. A wondrous glory
Flooded the world with health's returning
tide,
And all the sorrows of life's mystic story
Were but as wandering clouds through
moonlit heavens that glide.

1865.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

TO MY LITTLE FRIENDS AT NEW ROCHELLE.

LET fall the curtains, drop the shades ;
Behind the hills the twilight fades ;
The sullen rain-drops, heavily,
In the dank, drooping hemlocks lie ;
The fir-trees in the rounding park
Loom statelier through the gathering dark,
And reddening in the starless night
The tall church windows blaze with light.
The north wind whistles down the glades ;
Let fall the curtains, drop the shades,
And, while the fire-light's glowing gloom
Casts fitful shadows through the room,
Gather around the ruddy blaze
To welcome in the holidays.

See Haidee's dark brown eyes grow bright
As diamonds in the dancing light,
To hear the merry bells that ring
In the tall steeples, —ding dong ding ;

While Rena's songs sound sweet and rare
As music heard in mountain air,
And Ethel, with cheeks all abloom,
Goes dancing, dancing round the room,
Or softly lingers at my knee
To watch the wondrous Christmas Tree.

Sweet Christmas Eve ! The holidays
May pass, the firelight's cheerful blaze
Die out, the little waltzing feet
To other mazy measures beat,
And other Christmas Trees may spread
Their fragrant branches o'er my head,
And fairy fruit for us may fall
In many a distant bower and hall,
And Santa Claus at Christmas tide
May down the roaring chimneys ride,
And chapel bells with solemn chime
Ring in the Christ-child's holy time,
And tell to all the wondering Earth
The mystic story of his birth ;
But memory long shall fondly dwell
On this blithe eve at New Rochelle,
And fairer deem our Christmas Tree
Than all that have been or may be,
And keep the birthnight it embalms
Sweet as the breath of heavenly palms.

December, 1866.

SANTA CLAUS.

A HEALTH to good old Santa Claus,
And to his reindeer bold,
Whose hoofs are shod with eider-down,
Whose horns are tipped with gold.

He comes from utmost fairy-land
Across the wintry snows ;
He makes the fir-tree and the spruce
To blossom like the rose.

Over the quaint old gables,
Over the windy ridge,
By turret wall and chimney tall,
He guides his fairy sledge ;

Along the sleeping house-tops
Its silver runners trend,
All loaded down with wonder-books
And tales without an end.

He steals upon the slumbers
Of little rose-lipped girls,
And lays his waxen dollies down
Beside their golden curls.

He scatters blessings on his way
And sugar-coated plums.
He robs the sluggard of his rest,
With trumpets, guns, and drums.

Small feet, before the dawn of day,
Are marching to and fro,
Drums beat to arms through all the house,
And penny trumpets blow.

A health to brave old Santa Claus,
And to his reindeer bold,
Whose hoofs are shod with eider-down,
Whose horns are tipped with gold.

He tells us of the yule-log
That blazed in Saxon halls,
Of the marchpane and the mistletoe,
And the minstrels' merry calls ;

Of Christmas candles burning bright
In ages long ago ;

Those long dark ages when the world
Turned round so very slow.

He comes from utmost fairy-land
Across the wintry snows ;
He makes the fir-tree and the spruce
To blossom like the rose.

He lingers till the Christmas bells,
With sweet and solemn chime,
Come sounding o'er the centuries
Through years of war and crime.

Ring out, ring out, sweet Christmas bells !
Ring loud and silver clear !
Ring peace on earth, good will to man,
Till all the world shall hear !

December, 1867.

OUR LAST WALK.

TO R. B. B.

THE October day was dying, the dark sea
Flushed crimson at the coming of the sun ;
The ripened year lay drowsing on the lea,
Like a tired reaper when his task is done.

Slowly we loitered o'er the twilight wold,
Through velvet sheep-walks, and where reedy
plumes
And nodding fern tufts, tipt with tawny gold,
Fringe the dank borders where the gentian
blooms.

The very crickets seemed to drone and dream,
As if they felt the sweet mysterious charm
Of the hushed evening, and attuned their
theme
To its low cadences of slumberous calm.

With scarlet hips and sprays of purpling leaves
The brier-rose in the bosky thickets burned,
The maples flamed beneath the forest eaves,
And their cold gloom to sudden splendor
turned.

The level sunbeams glinted through the trees
And flecked with arrowy light their verdant
mold,
And bound red baldricks round their gnarled
knees,
And fringed the tufted knolls with raveled
gold.

Our woodland path was dim with tender dreams
Of the past summer, and a pensive gloom,
Lit by the rosy sunset's dying gleams,
Filled the long arches of our sylvan room :

Sweet haunting memories of our golden noons,
Our twilight wanderings by the lonely shore,
Our August mornings, our September noons,
Our long, sweet, summer days that are no
more.

We sat together by the sunset sea,
Screened from its solemn splendors by a wall

Of beech and oak and many a tangled tree
 Of the witch-elms that over-roofed our hall.

It was your birthnight, and close-clasped in
 mine

I held your hand, and blessed the imperial
 hour

That sheathed your spirit in a mortal shrine,
 And gave to bloom on earth a thornless
 flower.

OUR HAUNTED ROOM.

TO E. N. G.

“Oh life! infinite life! the beautiful gates unfold!
The shadowless light that knows no night
Breaks over the city of gold!
I rise on invisible pinions.
I breathe an ineffable breath!
Oh, life! rivers of life! for me there is no more death!”

[Last lines of Elizabeth N. Gladding, who died of malarial fever, while teaching the freedmen at St. Helena Island, S. C., July, 1867.]

HERE, where thy presence, like a rare,
Sweet perfume, lingers everywhere,
Elusive shadows haunt the air.

The dimly-pictured walls expand
To mountain sceneries, wild and grand,
Where war-worn castles proudly stand, —

Bastions and barbacans that gleam
In the old mirror’s crystal stream,
Like far-off palaces of dream.

A censer, curiously enwrought,
That burned in some barbaric court,
Drowsed in the Orient's dusky thought,

On the long centuries seems to brood,
When in Mongolian halls it stood,
Breathing of myrrh and sandal wood.

From an amphora, quaint and tall,
Funereal mosses float and fall,
And waver down the chamber wall,

Dark southern mosses that have hung
The wild sea-island woods among,
And o'er their deep morasses swung.

The hands that twined with exile grace
Their garlands round my flower-lipped vase,
Shrouding the corbel's sculptured face,

Fair-folded in a southern clime,
Absolved from all the toils of time,
Await the eternal morning's prime :

Fair-folded by the Atlantic wave,
'Mid the dark race she died to save,
Where homeless sea-winds haunt her grave.

But when the sunset fires are low,
And twilight fancies come and go,
And mystic winds of memory blow,—

When the heart feels its courage fail,
Its visioned hopes without avail,
Untouched, unfound its Holy Grail,—

Some solemn rapture, like a strain
Of music's beautiful disdain,
Uplifts beyond all mortal pain :

A sudden splendor rifts the gloom,—
A light that seems to bud and bloom
From out the shadows of the room :

A silken stir anear the door,
Like rose-leaves rippling o'er the floor,
And lo ! glad-smiling, as of yore,

Close at my side I see thee stand
In shining garments, ghostly grand,
A palm-branch budding in thy hand,

And, sweet as morning's music breath
Across the hills of Nazareth,
A low voice murmurs, “ No more death ! ”

MEMORIAL HYMN.

WRITTEN FOR THE DEDICATION OF THE RHODE
ISLAND SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' MONUMENT.

RAISE the proud pillar of granite on high,
 Graced with all honors that love can im-
 part ;
Lift its fair sculptures against the blue sky,
 Blazoned and crowned with the trophies of
 art, —
Crowned with the triumphs of genius and
 art !
Long may its white column soar to the
 sky,
 Like a lone lily that perfumes the mart,
 Lifting its coronal beauty on high.

Sons of Rhode Island, your record shall stand
 Graven on tablets of granite and bronze ;
Soldiers and sailors, beloved of our land,
 Darlings and heroes, our brothers and sons, —

Gray-bearded heroes and beautiful sons !
Soldiers and sailors, the flower of our land,
Deep as on tablets of granite and bronze,
Graved on our hearts shall your bright record stand.

Swell the loud psalm, let the war trumpets sound ;

Fling the old flag to the wild autumn blast ;
High in Valhalla our comrades are crowned ;
There may we meet when life's conflicts are past, —

Meet in the great Hall of Heroes at last !

High in Valhalla our comrades are crowned.

Swell with Hosannas the wild autumn blast !

Let the full chorus of voices resound !

September 16, 1871.

A BUNCH OF GRAPES.

PAINTED BY E. C. LEAVITT.

“Such as lurked behind the trees
In gardens of Hesperides.”

ON a sultry night in June,
In the trances of the moon,
Came a sudden thunder-squall
Crashing through the lindens tall ;
Every grape-vine was blown down,
Every rose-tree lost its crown,
Jagged lightning, sheeted rain,
Dashed athwart the window pane.

Then a gust swept through the hall,
A sudden splendor rent the pall
Of darkness ;— by its dazzling glare
I saw a stranger standing there,
With beaded raindrops in his hair.
Over eyes of dusky sheen
Vine-wreaths wove a leafy screen.

Such as crowns the marble brow
Of Bacchus in the busts we know ;
Such, at least, I *seemed* to see, —
Perchance the lightning blinded me.

Then a hand of plastic power,
Cool and dripping with the shower,
Dropped within my hand a bunch
Of grapelets, fit for Juno's lunch ;
Grapes by Orient sunbeams kissed
Into globes of amethyst ;
Such as haughty Guinevere
Flung into the haunted mere ;
Jewels for some queenly head,
In the purple born and bred ;
Every dark globe veined with fire,
 Like the brown cheek of a gypsy ;
Lucent drops of love and ire,

Such as made the Mænads tipsy ;
Every purple bead a gem
For Alraschid's diadem ;
Each a miracle of art,
Fit to charm a poet's heart.

Dazed I stood, without a word,
And the silence was unstirred

Save by storm winds sweeping o'er us,
And the thunder's hollow chorus,
As he vanished from my sight,
In the wild and lonesome night.

Was it Bacchus? Who can tell?
If not he, 't was — E. C. L.

THE OLD MIRROR.

OFT I see at twilight,
In the hollow gloom
Of the dim old mirror,
Phantasmal faces loom :

Noble antique faces,
Sad as with the weight
Of some ancient sorrow,
Some ancestral fate :

Little rose-lipped faces,
Locks of golden shine,
Laughing eyes of childhood
Looking into mine :

Sweet auroral faces,
Like the morning's bloom ;
Ah, how long and long ago
Shrouded for the tomb !

In a bridal chamber
Once the mirror hung;
Draperies of Indian looms
Over it were flung.

From its gilded sconces,
Fretted now with mold,
Waxen tapers glimmered
On carcanets of gold.

Perfumes of the summer night
Were through the lattice blown,
Scents of brier roses
And meadows newly mown.

The mirror then looked eastward
And caught the morning bloom,
And flooded with its rosy gold
The dreamlight of the room.

To-night 't is looking westward
Toward the sunset wall;
The wintry day is waning,
The dead leaves drift and fall.

All about the hearth-stone
The whitening ashes blow,

The wind is wailing an old song
 Heard long and long ago.

Like the dead leaves drifting
 Through the wintry air,
Like white ashes sifting
 O'er the hearth-stone bare,

Sad ancestral faces,
 Wan as moon-lit snow,
Haunt the dim old mirror
 That knew them long ago.

THE NIGHT BLOOMING CEREUS.

A NOCTURNE, FOR M. A.

A JULY evening, damp and cold ;
Over the dim horizon wall
Low clouds their heavy draperies rolled,
Till darkness gathered like a pall
Around me, and the shadowy room
Grew slumberous with its weight of gloom.

Heard I a step ? — or had I dreamed ?
Strange perfume through the chamber
streamed,
A phantom flower was in my hand
From some far off enchanted land.
Wondering, I placed it where a low
Lamp gleamed, like moonlight over snow.
The winds were hushed, the night was still,
The very silence seemed to thrill
With that strange effluence.

Filled with awe,
In rapt and wondering mood I saw
 The mystic lily, pure and cold,
Whose beauty never knew the sun,
 Its vestal garniture unfold,
Till slowly, slowly, one by one,
 Its lucent petals fall apart,
 Unveiling all its virgin heart !
From what far heights of glory came
 That coronal of silver flame ?
From what deep fount of wonder welled
 The holy gold its chalice held ?

Strange marvel of the summer night,
Veiled in an aureole of light,
 To vanish ere the morning hour !
Gazing upon thy magic flower,
 With such superfluous beauty fraught, —
Owning the presence of a power
 Beyond the reaches of our thought, —
Almost the gazer fears to guess
 The mystery of thy loveliness.

“A PAT OF BUTTER.”

TO EMILIA.

YELLOW as the cups of gold,
Peering through the springtime mold,
Sweeter than a breath of clover
Blowing the June meadows over. —
Butter, such as Goethe said
Werter saw his Charlotte spread
For her sisters and her brothers,
And, perhaps, for a few others,
Till it turned her lover's head ;
Such as sweet Red Riding Hood,
By that wicked wolf pursued,
Through the enchanted forest bore
To her grandam's fatal door.
'T is the ashen time of Lent.
Well, I know some fairy sent
This, for my soul's nourishment :
Well I know a fairy churned
The creamy lactage till it turned

To golden goblets ; that a dame
Of gracious presence, known to fame
By her sweet baptismal name
Of Emilia (Emily),
Pressed it into shape for me
With her jeweled fingers.

Say you :

“This is all a dream ?” I pray you,
Then, in sober truth to tell me
Has your huckster some to sell me ?
Tell me, tell me, I implore,
What’s his number ? Where’s his store ?

1877.

EPIGÆA.

—“Pink with promises of spring.”

“I WANDERED lonely as a cloud”
 Along the busy, bustling street,
 Unmindful of the alien crowd
 That passed me by with hurrying feet :
I knew not 't was an April day,
 So chill the winds that blew this way.

When, at a crossing of the flags
 A wanderer from the woods I met,
 With willow wands and alder tags
 And tufts of pink arbutus, wet
With April dews and showers, that fell
 Around them in some far-off dell,
 And redolent of the rich loam
 That fed them in their forest home —
Strange perfume, in whose effluence broods
 The wild, sweet spirit of the woods —
Bringing remembrance of old days,

Of spring-time wanderings through a maze
Of mossy, winding, woodland ways,
Or, o'er some brown hill's hoary side
Where the shy May-flower loves to hide.

Then, with a glinting of surprise
In the cool shadow of his eyes,
The woodman touched me with his wand
And turned the street to Fairy-land!
“Well met,” he cried ; “I have a few
Tufts of arbutus. These for *you*.”

April, 1876.

“SCIENCE.”

“The words ‘vital force,’ ‘instinct,’ ‘soul,’ are only expressions of our ignorance.” — BUCHNER.

WHILE the dull Fates sit nodding at their loom,
Benumbed and drowsy with its ceaseless boom,
I hear, as in a dream, the monody
Of life’s tumultuous, ever-ebbing sea ;
The iron tramp of armies hurrying by
Forever and forever but to die ;
The tragedies of time, the dreary years,
The frantic carnival of hopes and fears,
The wild waltz-music wailing through the
gloom,
The slow death-agonies, the yawning tomb,
The loved ones lost forever to our sight,
In the wide waste of chaos and old night ;
Earth’s long, long dream of martyrdom and
pain ;
No God in heaven to rend the welded chain
Of endless evolution !

Is this *all*?

And mole-eyed “ Science,” gloating over bones,
The skulls of monkeys and the Age of Stones,
Blinks at the golden lamps that light the hall
Of dusty death, and answers: “ It is all.”

1877.

TO THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

THOU ancient Mystery ! thy solemn night,—
Pierced by attempered rays from that far
realm
That lies beyond, dark with excess of light,—
No more the shuddering spirit shall o'er-
whelm.

No more thy charnel glooms the soul appall,
Pale Azrael ! awful eidolon of Death !—
The dawn-light breaks athwart thy glimmering
hall,
And thy dank vapors own the morning's
breath.

Too long the terror of the dread unknown
Hath the wrung heart with hopeless anguish
riven ;
The blasting splendors of the fiery throne
“ Burning within the inmost veil of
Heaven ”—

The gloom of that great glory, which of old
 Haunted the vision of the prophet's dream,
When the archangel of the Lord foretold
 The day of doom, by dark Hiddekel's stream.

In vain, through lingering years, I turned the
 page
Rich with these sacred records of the past,
Hope languished, and no legend could assuage
 The rayless gloom thy awful shadow cast.

In dread apocalypse, I saw thee borne
 On the pale steed, triumphant o'er the
 doomed,
Till the rent Heavens like a scroll were torn,
 And hollow earth her hundred isles en-
 tombed.

In vain I questioned the cold stars, and kept
 Lone vigils by the grave of buried love ;
No angel wing athwart the darkness swept,
 No voice vouchsafed my sorrow to reprove.

Was it the weight of that remorseless woe,
 The lonely anguish of that long despair, —
That made thy marble lips at length forego
 Their silence at my soul's unceasing prayer ?

Henceforth, the sorrowing heart its pulse shall
still

To solemn cadences of sweet repose,
Content life's mystic passion to fulfill
In the great calm that from thy promise flows.

Welcome as the white feet of those who bring
Glad tidings of great joy unto the world,
Shall fall the shadow of thy silver wing
Over the weary couch of woe unfurled.

A heavenly halo kindles round thy brow ;
Beyond the palms of Eden softly wave ;
Bright messengers athwart the empyrean go,
And love to love makes answer o'er the
grave.

THE PORTRAIT.

AFTER long years I raised the folds concealing
That face, magnetic as the morning's beam :
While slumbering memory thrilled at its reveal-
ing,
Like Memnon wakening from his marble
dream.

Again I saw the brow's translucent pallor,
The dark hair floating o'er it like a plume ;
The sweet, imperious mouth, whose haughty
valor
Defied all portents of impending doom.

Eyes planet calm, with something in their
vision
That seemed not of earth's mortal mixture
born ;
Strange mythic faiths and fantasies E'ysian,
And far, sweet dreams of "fairy lands for-
lorn."

Unfathomable eyes that held the sorrow
Of vanished ages in their shadowy deeps,
Lit by that prescience of a heavenly morrow
Which in high hearts the immortal spirit
keeps.

Oft has that pale, poetic presence haunted
My lonely musings at the twilight hour,
Transforming the dull earth-life it enchanted,
With marvel and with mystery and with
power.

Oft have I heard the sullen sea-wind moaning
Its dirge-like requiems on the lonely shore,
Or listening to the Autumn woods intoning
The wild, sweet legend of the lost Lenore;

Oft in some ashen evening of October,
Have stood entranced beside a moldering
tomb
Hard by that visionary Lake of Auber,
Where sleeps the shrouded form of Ulalume;

Oft in chill, star-lit nights have heard the chim-
ing
Of far-off mellow bells on the keen air,
And felt their molten-golden music timing
To the heart's pulses, answering unaware.

Sweet, mournful eyes, long closed upon earth's
sorrow

Sleep restfully after life's fevered dream !
Sleep, wayward heart ! till on some cool, bright
morrow,
Thy soul, refreshed, shall bathe in morning's
beam.

Though cloud and sorrow rest upon thy story,
And rude hands lift the drapery of thy pall,
Time, as a birthright, shall restore the glory,
And Heaven rekindle all the stars that fall.

1870.

THE VENUS OF MILO.

"When I entered for the last time that magnificent hall of the Louvre, where stands on her pedestal the ever-blessed goddess of beauty, our beloved Lady of Milo, the *diva* looked on me with a face of mournful and tender compassion."—HEINRICH HEINE.

GODDESS of dreams, mother of love and sorrow,
Such sorrow as from love's fair promise flows,
Such love as from love's martyrdoms doth boro-
row

That conquering calm which only sorrow
knows!—

Venus, Madonna! so serene and tender,
In thy calm after-bloom of life and love,
More fair than when of old thy sea-born splen-
dor
Surprised the senses of Olympian Jove!—

Not these the lips, that kindling into kisses,
Poured subtile heats through Adon's lan-
guid frame,
Rained on his sullen lips their warm caresses,
Thrilled to his heart and turned its frost to
flame.

Thy soul transcending passion's wild illusion,
Its fantasy and fever and unrest,
Broods tenderly in thought's devout seclusion,
O'er some lost love-dream lingering in thy
breast.

Thy face seems touched with pity for the an-
guish

Of earth's disconsolate and lonely hearts ;
For all the lorn and loveless lives that languish
In solitary homes and sordid marts :

With pity for the faithlessness and feigning,
The vain repentance and the long regret,
The perfumed lamps in lonely chambers wan-
ing,

The untouched fruits on golden salvers set :

With pity for the patient watchers yearning
Through glimmering casements over mid-
night moors,

Thrilled by the echo of far feet returning
Through the blank darkness of the empty
doors :

With sorrow for the coy, sweet buds that cher-
ish

In virgin pride love's luxury of gloom,

And in their fair unfolded beauty perish,
Fading like flowers that knew not how to
bloom :

With sorrow for the over-blown pale roses
That yield their fragrance to the wandering
air ;
For all the penalties that life imposes
On passion's dream, on love's divine despair.

1868.

IN MEMORIAM.

How many Aprils have I roamed beside thee
O'er the brown hills where now alone I
tread?

And though far realms of wonder now divide
thee
From our dim world, I cannot deem thee
dead.

I held thee in my arms while life was failing,—
Close in my arms and watched thy fluttering
breath,

Till the red sunset in the west was paling
And twilight veiled the awful calm of death.

In that white calm I saw then and forever
The grandeur of thy spirit and its power;
E'en as its mortal vestment seemed to sever,
I saw the immortal bursting into flower.

That soul, so lofty in its isolation;
So strong in weakness, resolute in pain;

So self-reliant in its reprobation
Of servile arts and custom's iron reign;

Mid alien crowds alone, with none to know
thee,

With nothing left behind thee to regret,
Save one sad heart that love's sweet debt doth
owe thee,

One lonely heart that never can forget.

April, 1878.

/ MY FLOWERS.

SWEET buds and berries gathered, far and wide,
In haunted glens or wild sequestered ways ;
By sun or starlight, — in the purple pride,
Of Summer, or in Autumn's golden haze ; —
Long have I held ye, clasped within my hands,
Wooing your mystic odors to restore
The sweet aroma of those flowery lands ; —
The perfume of the days that are no more :
Sad Autumn leaves, touched with the fatal
glow
Kindling athwart the forest's silent gloom,
Farewell ! I fling ye on the way-side now,
Where heedless feet may trample on your
bloom ;
For, through the silence and the o'ershadow-
ing calm,
Floats the far perfume of the Eden palm.

TRANSLATIONS.



THE GARDEN MINSTER.

FROM THE FRENCH OF VICTOR HUGO.

How seems this garden, with its depths of shade
And verdurous, vaulted aisles, for worship made ;
Where every blossom bows its head in prayer,
Or swings its censer on the silent air ;
Where the slow footsteps of the Summer Hours
From dawn till dusk descend on opening flowers,
And, as they pass, with light and shade by turns,
Fill the cool hollows of the marble urns.
A holy rapture thrills me while I gaze
Up the blue heavens through the o'ershadowing maze ;
Or sit long hours in sweet monastic dreams,
Where o'er its rocky bed the river streams,
In the long grotto, dusky, cool and dim,
Where ivies cluster round the fountain's brim.

THE ROUT OF THE CHILDREN.

FROM THE FRENCH OF VICTOR HUGO.

LITTLE darlings, return to my desolate room !
Since I drove you away, it is mantled in
gloom ;—
Since I drove you away, with rude, menacing
words ;—
What harm had you done me, you dear little
birds ?
Little rosy-lipped bandits ;— what Japanese
vase
Did you dash into fragments ?— What picture
deface ?
Ah, none : you but stopped in my study a min-
ute,
To plunder my desk of some papers within it—
Some manuscript verses devoted to Fame ;
Which you threw in the fire, and fanned to a
flame ;
To see, as you said, how the wandering sparks
Ran over the paper like lamp-lighted barques,

Or gleamed, as from window to window at night,
One sees in the houses a vanishing light.

Then muttering vengeance, in menacing tone,
I shouted, " Begone, imps, and leave me alone !
You have burnt up my verses, entitled ' To
Fame : '

I shall die, and the world never hear of my
name."

Great loss then, indeed ! and great cause for
dismay, —

A strophe, ill-born in the noise of your play !
Great Bobadil verses that puffed as they went,
And swaggered their impotent meanings to
vent ;

And long Alexandrines, entangling their feet
Like a pack of rude school-boys, let loose in
the street.

You did but redeem from a fate more obscure
The rhyme that some newspaper waited to
lure

To that cavernous cell, called the poet's own
nook,

Where no reader of newspapers pauses to look.
For *this* have I raved ! Ah, I blush to recall
How I sat, with my chair leaning back to the
wall,

Still muttering vengeance, in menacing tone,
And repeating “ Begone, imps, and leave me
alone ! ”

Alone ! fine result, and great triumph ! alone !
Forgotten — forlorn, like a toad in a stone !
And here have you left me, — my eye on the
door,
Grave, haughty, severe, — but you mind me no
more ;
For without you have found all you sought to
obtain, —
All the freedom that here you had sighed for
in vain, —
The fresh air, the streamlet that runs through
the grass,
Where you fling in sweet blossoms and leaves
as you pass ;
The breezes, the flowers, the perfumes divine, —
Ah, this poem of God is far better than
mine !
You may pluck out the leaves of his book with-
out fear,
Nor tremble the voice of the tyrant to hear : —
His roses and pinks you may rifle all day,
Nor regret the dull room whence I drove you
away.

As for me, all the joy of my day has departed ;
I sit in my chair — half asleep, heavy hearted,
While old Doctor Ennui, a Londoner, born
Of fogs and the Thames on a December morn,
Who waited to enter till you had gone out,
Has moped in my study all day in a pout,
And, usurping your corner, sits grouty and
grim,

He gaping at me, and I gaping at him.

The pages I turned with such zeal to explore,
The books and the manuscripts please me no
more :

I miss, o'er my shoulder, the sweet, peering
face,

I miss the small finger to point out the place,
The nudge of the elbow, the sly little kiss,
The brow full of candor, that always said
“Yes,”

The great eyes of wonder, the frolicksome
screams,

The sweet humming voices that lapt me in
dreams.

Return little birds ! — since I drove you away
I have lost all the sunshine and bloom of my
day.

Take my teacups, enameled with butterflies' wings,—

All my Dresden and Sèvres and beautiful things :—

You may twirl the round globe, the big map may unroll,

And sketch out new countries with crayon and coal.

My pictures and statues are waiting for you,—
My vases of jasper and bright or-molu :

Of my corals and shells you may gather your fill,

And my malachite tables may mount at your will.

Your whooping and hiding,— to all I agree ;

Your trooping and training are music to me.

Like heroes, returned from some great battle ground,

You may drag my old armchair in triumph around :

My great painted Bible may turn o'er and o'er,—
That book you ne'er touched but with terror before,—

Where you see on the page, in fine colors displayed,

Dieu le père, in an emperor's habit arrayed !

Then return, little doves ! to my desolate room ;
Since I drove you away, it is mantled in
gloom ;—

Oh, return ! you may ransack and rifle and
reign,

So you will but forgive me, and love me again.

THE LOST CHURCH.

FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND.

IN yonder dim and pathless wood
Strange sounds are heard at twilight hour,
And peals of solemn music swell,
As from some minster's lofty tower.
From age to age those sounds are heard,
Borne on the breeze at twilight hour ;
From age to age, no foot hath found
A pathway to the minster's tower.

Late, wandering in that ancient wood,
As onward through the gloom I trod,
From all the woes and wrongs of earth
My soul ascended to its God.
When lo ! in the hushed wilderness
I heard, far off, that solemn bell :
Still heavenward as my spirit soared,
Wilder and sweeter rang the knell.

While thus in holy musings rapt,
My mind from outward sense withdrawn,
Some power had caught me from the earth,
And far into the heavens upborne—
Methought a hundred years had passed,
In mystic visions as I lay,
When suddenly the parting clouds
Seemed opening wide and far away.

No midday sun its glory shed,—
The stars were shrouded from my sight,—
And lo ! majestic o'er my head,
A minster shone in solemn light.
High through the lurid heavens it seemed
Aloft, on cloudy wings, to rise,
Till all its pointed turrets gleamed,
Far flaming, through the vaulted skies ;

The bell, with full, resounding peal,
Rang booming through the rocking tower :
No hand had stirred its iron tongue,
Slow swaying to the storm-wind's power.
My bosom beating like a bark
Dashed by the surging ocean's foam,
I trod, with faltering, fearful joy,
The mazes of the mighty dome.

A soft light through the oriel streamed,
Like summer moonlight's golden gloom ;
Far through the dusky arches gleamed,
And filled with glory all the room.
Pale sculptures of the sainted dead
Seemed waking from their icy thrall,
And many a glory-circled head
Smiled sadly from the storied wall.

Low at the altar's foot I knelt,
Transfixed with awe, and dumb with dread,
For blazoned on the vaulted roof
Were heaven's fiercest glories spread.
Yet when I raised my eyes once more,
The vaulted roof itself was gone ;
Wide open was heaven's lofty door,
And every cloudy veil withdrawn !

What visions burst upon my soul —
What joys unutterable there,
In waves on waves, forever roll
Like music through the pulseless air —
These never mortal tongue may tell :
Let him who fain would prove their power
Pause when he hears that solemn knell
Float on the breeze at twilight hour.

LEONORA.

FROM THE GERMAN OF BÜRGER.

FROM heavy dreams, sad Leonore
Rose with the dawning day ;
Her heart oppressed by boding fears
At Wilhelm's long delay.
With Frederic's force her soldier went
To meet his country's foe ;
And since, no tidings had he sent
To tell of weal or woe.

The king and the proud empress-queen,
Weary of endless war,
At length renounce their fruitless strife
And welcome peace once more.
The weary, toil-worn warriors come,
Rejoicing on their way ;
With blare of trump and beat of drum,
In oaken garlands gay.

And every way-side, every path,
Is thronged with eager feet,
Of friends and kindred, hurrying forth
The coming host to meet.
The lover greets his plighted bride ;
But ah ! for poor Leonore, —
No greeting to her pallid lips
Shall bring the roses more.

She wandered up and down the road,
To frantic fears a prey,
And vainly questioned all that came,
Throughout that weary day ;
The army now had all passed by !
She tore her raven hair,
She threw herself upon the earth,
In desolate despair.

The mother folds her to her heart,
And seeks with counsels vain
Some word of comfort to impart
To soothe her darling's pain.
“Oh mother, what is lost is lost !
Now Earth and Heaven may go.
There is no pitying God in Heaven —
No love for aught below.”

“ Peace, peace ! who know the Father’s love,

Knows he can aid impart ; —

The blessed sacrament shall soothe

Thy pierced and bleeding heart.”

“ No balm upon this burning heart

The sacrament can pour ! —

No sacrament to love and life

The cold, cold dead restore.”

“ Oh mother, would my lamp of life

Would sink in endless night !

How shall I loathe the midnight gloom

And loathe the morning light !

And what, to me, is Heaven’s bliss.

And what, to me, is Hell ;

With him, with him is happiness,

And oh, without him, Hell ! ”

“ Perchance, dear child, he loves no more,

And wandering far and wide,

Hath sought, upon a foreign shore,

To wed a foreign bride.”

“ Oh mother, what is lost is lost !

There is no pitying love —

No joy in life, no balm in death —

No hope in Heaven above.

“ Go out, life’s light,—forever out ;
Die, die, in night and dread !
There is no pitying God in Heaven ;
Would, would that I were dead ! ”
Thus raged the frenzy of despair
Within her burning brain —
Thus with God’s righteous providence
She strove in anguish vain.

She beat her breast and tore her hair
Till the long day was done, —
Till in the West the silent stars
Came twinkling one by one.
She sat within her lonely room,
Nor marked the dying day,
Till the moon’s light, o’er tower and height,
In silver glory lay.

When lo ! she hears a courser’s hoofs
Ring on the frozen ground :
A knight alights before the gate —
His clanging arms resound.
And hark ! a low and soft “ kling ling ”
Sounds through the silent room !
And hark ! a well known voice she hears
Beside her in the gloom !

“What ho ! Leonore : unbar the door ; —
Art watching or asleep ? —
Doth my fair bride forget her vows,
Or fear her vows to keep ? ”

“Ah Wilhelm, thou ! so late at night ?
Oh, I have watched and wept ;
What from thy Leonora’s side
So long her love hath kept ! ”

“From far Hungarian fields I come
On my lone midnight ride,
To bear thee to thy distant home ;
Away, away my bride ! ”

“The wind blows through the hawthorn bush ;
In whistles loud and shrill ;
Come in, and warm thee in my arms ;
Ah ! why so cold and still ? ”

“Let the wind through the hawthorn blow,
Or howl across the mere ;
The black horse paws, and clank the spurs,
I dare not linger here.
Come, don thy snow-white robes with speed,
And swiftly mount behind ;
We ride a hundred leagues ere day,
Our bridal bed to find ! ”

“ And must we ride a hundred leagues
To reach our bridal bower ?

Hark ! even now, the booming bell
Tolls out the midnight hour.”

“ Ha ! dost thou fear ? — the moon shines
clear ;
Soon will our course be sped !
I bear thee to our bridal home
And to our bridal bed.”

“ Ah ! tell me where the bridal hall,
And where the couch is spread ? ”

“ Far, far from here ; cold, narrow, drear,
Lies our low marriage bed ! ”

“ Hast room for me ? ” “ For thee and me ;
Come, busk thee, darling bride ;
The wedding guests are waiting,
The door stands open wide.”

The maiden donned her bridal robes ;
On the black steed she sprung,
And round the knight her snowy arms
In trembling silence flung.

And on they gallop, fast and far,
Nor mount nor stream their course can bar ;
While horse and rider pant and blow ;
The fire-sparks flashing as they go.

The crags shoot by, — the castles fly, —
The rattling hoofs resound ;
The bridges thunder 'neath their tread,
And rings the hollow ground.
“ Ha ! doth my Leonora fear
With her true love to ride ?
The midnight moon shines cold and clear —
The dead ride swift, my bride ! ”

Hark ! wailings float upon the air,
And hollow dirges ring !
Why tolls the bell that solemn knell,
Why flaps the raven's wing ?
Lo, sweeping o'er the lonely moor,
A dark funereal train !
They chant a requiem o'er the bier, —
A hoarse, sepulchral strain.

“ Bury your dead when midnight's past,
With wild lament and prayer ;
To-night I wed a fearless bride,
Our banquet ye shall share.
Come, priest and choir, and mourners all,
Come, crone the marriage song ;
Come, priest, and bless the bridal bed,
And join the merry throng.”

Now fades into the dusky air
The coffin and the pall ;
They sweep along, a ghostly throng,
The mourners, priest, and all ;
And faster, faster, still they speed,
O'er wild morass and moonlight mead,
While horse and rider pant and blow,
The fire sparks flashing as they go !

How swiftly, on the right and left,
The mountains hurry by ;
How swiftly, on the right and left,
Town, tower, and forest fly !
“ Doth my love fear ? the moon shines clear ;
Ah ha ! dost fear the dead ?
The dead ride swift, — hurrah ! hurrah ! ”
“ Ah, speak not of the dead ! ”

Now, where the moonbeams faintly fall,
Yon frantic rabble see ;
How fearfully they wheel and spin,
Beneath the gallows-tree !
“ Halloo, halloo ! ye grisly crew,
Come here, and follow me ;
Around us prance a fetter-dance,
And quit the gallows-tree.”

And now, across the moonlit waste,
They hurry on behind ;
A sound like dry and withered leaves,
Low rustling in the wind.

And onward, onward still they speed,
Nor rock nor stock their course impede ;
While horse and rider pant and blow,
The fire-sparks flashing as they go !

Fast flies the quiet moonlight scene,
Fast, fast and far, it flies ;
Fast fly the fleecy clouds above,
And fast the starry skies.

“ Ah ! dost thou fear ? — the moon shines clear ;
And fast the dead can ride.”
“ Oh, name the dead no more ! ” “ Ah, ha !
Dost fear the dead, my bride ?

“ Methinks I smell the morning air,
And hark ! the cock doth crow !
Then onward speed, my trusty steed !
Haste, haste ! our sands run low.
Our race is run, our course is done,
And we are at the goal ;
Swift ride the dead, — hurrah, hurrah !
Come, priest, bind soul to soul ! ”

Up to a gloomy portal now,
With slackened rein they ride ;
When lo ! the massive bar and bolt
Back from their staples glide.
And as the dark and sounding door
Upon its hinges turns,
She sees, in the moon's glimmering light,
Gray tombs and moldering urns.

Suddenly, from the rider's form,
By some unearthly spell,
The welded armor, piece by piece,
In shivered fragments fell.
She sees a hideous skeleton,
A ghastly Horror, stand
Before her glazing eyes revealed, —
An hour-glass in his hand.

High reared the fiery, frantic steed,
And trembled with affright ;
Then sank into the yawning earth,
And vanished from her sight !
Wild howlings echoed through the air,
And from the graves beneath ;
While Leonora's throbbing heart
Trembled 'twixt life and death.

Now round her, in the pallid light,
The wheeling spectres fly,
And, as they vanish from her sight,
In hollow murmurs cry :
“ Repent ; nor doubt the Father’s love ;
Submit to Heaven’s control :
We yield thy body to the earth :
May God receive thy soul.”

FROM GOETHE'S FAUST.

PART SECOND.

SCENE AT THE COURT OF THE EMPEROR.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

IT seems that everywhere on this dull earth
Something is lacking ; — *here* of gold is dearth.
'T is true we cannot sweep it from the floor,
But wisdom can unfathomed depths explore.
In mountain clefts and dungeons manifold,
Are piles of minted and unminted gold,
And I, by spiritual force and trust
In mighty nature, can obtain the dust.

CHANCELLOR.

Nature and spirit ! — never Christian spake
Such words as these. — We burn men at the
stake
For such profanities. Foul words and evil !
Nature means sin, and spirit means the Devil ;

And, between both, is nursed the abortive
brood
Whose monster heresies mankind delude.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

By this I see what wiseacres ye are ;
What ye can handle not seems miles afar :
What ye can grasp not is an empty shade ;
What ye divine not must all search evade :
That which ye have not poised in weight is
stinted,
And no coin current save what ye have minted.

TO THE CLOUDS.

FROM THE GERMAN.

CLOUDS that sweep the midnight heaven,
On your wild wings let me rove ;
Leave me not with anguish riven,
None who love me,—none to love.

Oft, my nightly vigils keeping,
I have watched ye till the dawn ;
Through the far blue heavens sweeping,
On your snowy pinions borne.

Away,—away, forever speeding,
Careless wanderers of the air,—
Human joy or woe unheeding,—
Ah, ye pause not at my prayer :

Leave, oh, leave me not in sadness,—
Heavenly longings in my breast,—
Bear me, on your wings of gladness,
To the far home of my rest.

On the lonely hills of morning
Breaks a red and lurid ray;—
Hide me, hide me from the dawning,—
Fold me from the dreary day!

THE DYING HEROES.

FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND.

THE valiant Danes drive back the Swedish host
In wild confusion to the northern coast ;
The sounding chariots clash, — the bright swords gleam,
The broad, round shields flash back the moon's cold beam ;
On the red corse-field, mid the fierce affray,
Lies the young Sven and Ulf the warrior gray.

SVEN.

Alas ! my father, in the power and bloom
Of life, grim Norna calls me to the tomb :
In vain my mother, from the oaken bough,
Weaves a bright garland for her warrior's brow ; —
From her high tower my Edith looks in vain
To see my chariot in the victor's train.

ULF.

In the gray night for thee her tears shall fall,
Till visioned sleep thine image shall recall ;
Yet mourn not thus : the path which thou hast
led,
Though dark the way, she will not fear to
tread ;
Soon shall she, smiling through her golden
hair,
For thee at Odin's feast the bowl prepare.

SVEN.

No more the solemn chant my voice shall raise
Amid our warrior youth on festal days ;
The deeds of kings and heroes sing no more ;
Their conquering arms, their fates in love and
war ;
Through my neglected harp the wind shall sigh,
And wake low dirges as it wanders by.

ULF.

High towers above us, like an eagle's nest,
The bright Valhalla of our fathers' rest ;
The stars roll under it, and, far below,
Red meteors gleam and fiery comets glow ;—
There, at the solemn feast, we meet again ;
Lift up thy song to a triumphal strain !

SVEN.

Ah, heavy doom ! thus from the bright world
torn, —

From life and love in youth's unhonored morn ;
While yet no proud deed of the battle-field —
No trophied arms, are sculptured on my shield :
Twelve fearful judges sit enthroned on high ;
How shall I shrink before each awful eye !

ULF.

One lofty deed their favor shall secure, —
One deed whose rays no shadow can obscure ;
Pours not thy young heart, on this barren
strand,

Its life-blood freely for our fatherland ?
And see ! our foemen yield : — the clouds are
riven !

There lies our pathway to the halls of Heaven !

THE COTTAGE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GLEIM.

I HAVE a cottage by the hill;
It stands upon a meadow green;
Behind it flows a murmuring rill,
Cool-rooted moss and flowers between.

Beside the cottage stands a tree,
That flings its shadow o'er the eaves;
And scarce the sunshine visits me,
Save when a light wind rifts the leaves.

A red-bird sings upon a spray,
Through the sweet summer-time, night-long,
And evening travelers on their way
Linger to hear her plaintive song.

Thou, maiden, with the yellow hair, —
The winds of life are sharp and chill, —
Wilt thou not seek a shelter there,
In yon lone cottage by the hill ?

CINDERELLA,
AND
THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

The two following Poems, written conjointly by Mrs. Whitman and her sister, Miss Susan Anna Power, appeared in Mrs. Kirkland's "Union Magazine" in 1848, and were revised and reprinted in 1867.

CINDERELLA.

“ Pomp and feast and revelry,
Masque and antique pageantry.”
L'Allegro.

PART I.

THE night was cold, the skies were bleak,
The ways were dark and dreary,
When Cinderella o'er the fire
Sat hovering, worn and weary.
Neglected in her childhood's home,
She knew no mother's care,
Condemned, in youthful loveliness,
A menial's lot to share.

Her haughty sisters spend their days
In splendor and parade;
To ball and opera they go,
To play and masquerade:
And now, bedecked with gems and gold,
In festal crowds they shone,
While she beside the chimney nook
Sat musing and alone.

The ruddy hearth-fires gleam and fade
Upon the dusky wall,
And on the oaken paneling
Fantastic shadows fall.
No sound is heard in all the house,
So lonely now and drear,
And e'en the cricket's drowsy song
Falls faintly on her ear.

There pensive by the hearth she sat
And watched the flickering fire,
Nor saw that close beside her stood
A dame in rich attire.
When, lo ! upon her startled gaze
A matchless splendor broke,
As thus, in thrilling words and low,
The radiant fairy spoke :—

“No longer shalt thou moping sit,
Oppressed with gloom and care,
But at the royal banquet shine
The fairest of the fair.
Go, search, and by the garden wall
A pompon thou shalt find,
And lo ! a chariot shall arise
From out its golden rind !

“ Down in the cellar’s darkest nook
A rat-trap shalt behold,
Whose narrow space doth stable steeds
Of more than mortal mold !
Behind the moss-grown garden well
Six lizards thou shalt see ;
These, with the pompion and the trap,
Go quickly bring to me.”

And now she sees with wondering awe
Six powdered footmen stand,
Six mice transformed to stately steeds
Beneath the fairy’s wand !
At length a glittering car arose
From out the pompion’s rind,
While blazing torches flamed before
And footmen swung behind !

Lo ! Cinderella’s tattered garb,
With dust and ashes strown,
Touched by the fairy’s magic wand,
With pearls and diamonds shone !
All woven woof of mortal loom
Her vesture did surpass,
And on her little feet were seen
Two slippers framed of glass !

“Now,” said the fairy, “mount thy car
And to the palace speed,
But as you prize my fairy gifts,
My parting counsel heed :
Shouldst thou within the castle gates
Outstay the midnight hour,
Thy gorgeous robes to tatters turn,
My spell hath lost its power.”

She said :—the fiery coursers prance,
Their rattling hoofs resound,
With tossing heads and flying manes
They clear the frozen ground.
The Prince (informed some noble dame
Arrives in matchless state),
With all his royal retinue,
Receives her at the gate.

With courtly grace the startled child
He up the staircase hands,
And now within the blazing hall
Sweet Cinderella stands.
Soon as she stept within the door
The music ceased to sound,
And on the softly perfumed air
A murmur floats around.

Before her nobles bent the knee,
And courtly dames caressed,
While foremost in the glittering throng
Her haughty sisters pressed.
Amid the glittering throng she stood
Like some wild woodland flower,
Blushing at her own loveliness,
And trembling at its power.

The Prince, enamored, claimed her hand
And bore her to the dance,
And oft amid its mazy rings
She sought her sisters' glance.
At length upon the castle clock
She chanced to turn her eye
And starts to see upon its face
The hour of midnight nigh !

Then, swiftly as a falling star
Shoots through the gloom of night,
She sprang into her airy car
And vanished from their sight.
And now of all her splendor reft
And all her rich attire,
She takes her solitary place
Beside the smoldering fire.

But soon she hears a thundering knock
Resounding through the hall ; —
The sisters all come rushing in,
Enraptured with the ball.
All talk at once and all descant
Upon the unknown guest,
And tell of all the courtesies
She showed them at the feast.

They say that court and city now
Are ringing with her fame.
The Prince has offered countless sums
To learn the stranger's name.
Fair Cinderella, wild with joy,
Seems little heed to take,
She only yawns and rubs her eyes
As if but half awake.

At length she said, "Ah, sisters dear,
Might I but only go,
To-morrow night, in pearl and white,
With you to see the show ?"
"In pearl and white, you little fright !
A figure you would cut !
How would your pearl and white agree
With cinders and with smut ?"

“Then would my sister Charlotte, dear,
 But only give me leave
To wear the yellow satin dress
 She wore on Christmas eve ?”

“Lend you my satin dress, indeed !
 But understand at once
That courts and balls are not for such
 As you, you little dunce !”

PART II.

Again the palace halls are thronged
 With many a noble guest,
And Cinderella, lovelier still,
 Is there among the rest.
So fast the golden moments fly
 In rapture and delight,
She soon forgets to count the hours
 Nor heeds their rapid flight.

But, hark ! at length the castle clock
 Sounds from its lofty tower ;
She starts to hear it, stroke by stroke,
 Toll forth the midnight hour.

She fled across the marble floor
Fleet as the mountain wind,
But, tripping at the door, she left
One shining shoe behind.

There, gleaming like a diamond spark,
The little slipper lies,
Dropped like a star-flake in the path
Where some swift meteor flies.
Breathless she gains the castle court,
In terror and dismay,
With naught of all her splendor left
Nor all her rich array.

Her rich array, to tatters turned,
Hangs fluttering in the wind ;
The mice run scampering on before,
The pompion rolls behind !
The guards that round the portal wait,
With startled eyes, behold
A vagrant leave the palace gate
And cross the moonlit wold.

And wondering menials stare to see
The little beggar pass,
For nought of all her pomp remains
Except one shoe of glass.

Next day the herald's trump did sound
Proclaiming far and wide
That whosoe'er could wear the shoe
Should be the Prince's bride !

From street to street, from house to house,
The glittering prize they bear,
But ne'er a lady in the land
That little shoe could wear.

'T was midnight ere they reached the door
Where Cinderella dwelt,
Who vainly strove to veil her heart
And hide the joy she felt.

The sisters rushed into the hall
And sought, with vain ado,
To press and pinch and crowd their feet
Into the fairy shoe.
Till Cinderella, all the while
Demurely standing by,
Now on the royal messenger
Cast an appealing eye.

The mute request with curling lip
The tittering sisters see,
But soon to wonder and amaze
Was turned their scornful glee.

With perfect ease she slides her foot
 Into the fairy shoe,
Then, blushing, from her folded vest
 Its little partner drew.

When, lo ! soft music filled the air,
 Resplendent lustre shone ;
The fairy comes to claim her charge
 And lead her to a throne.
And " Ne'er forget, my child," she said,
 " In sorrow's darkest hour
That unseen guardians still are nigh
 To aid thee with their power :

" And often in yon glittering court
 Recall my last behest,
For pleasure's self pursued too far
 Shall lose its sweetest zest.
Then count the moments as they pass
 And heed their warning chime,
Nor ever in life's mazy dance
 Forget the flight of time."

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

“A tale of forests and enchantments drear.” *Il Penseroso.*

Sister, 't is the noon of night! —
Let us, in the web of thought,
Weave the threads of ancient song,
From the realms of Fairie brought.

Thou shalt stain the dusky warp
In nightshade wet with twilight dew ;
I, with streaks of morning gold,
Will strike the fabric through and through.

PART I.

WHERE a lone castle by the sea
Upreared its dark and moldering pile,
Far seen, with all its frowning towers,
For many and many a weary mile ;

The wild waves beat the castle walls
And bathed the rock with ceaseless showers,
The winds roared hoarsely round the pile,
And moaned along its moldering towers.

Within those wide and echoing halls,
To guard her from a fatal spell,

A maid, of noble lineage born,
Was doomed in solitude to dwell.

With portents dark and omens dire,
The orphan's natal day began,
As warring destinies conspire
Her charmèd life to bless or ban.

Four Fairies graced the infant's birth
With fame and beauty, wealth and power ;
A fifth, by one fell stroke, reversed
The magic splendors of her dower :

If e'er a spindle's shining steel
Should pierce the maiden's lily hand,
A solemn trance her eyes should seal
In sleep's forlorn, enchanted land :

A hundred years her soul should stray
In far-off shadow-lands of dream,
Till, warm beneath love's kindling ray,
It opened to the morning's beam.

In olden times the tale had birth,
By wandering minstrels told of yore,
Whose names have perished from the earth, —
Whose legends live in fairy lore.

The wild waves beat the castle wall,
And bathed the rock with ceaseless showers ;
Dark, heaving billows plunge and fall
In whitening foam beneath the towers.

There, rocked by winds and lulled by waves,
In youthful grace the maiden grew,
And from her solitary dreams
A sweet and pensive pleasure drew.

Yet often, from her lattice high,
She gazed athwart the gathering night
To mark the sea-gulls wheeling by,
And longed to follow in their flight.

One winter night, beside the hearth
She sat and watched the smoldering fire,
While now the tempest seemed to lull,
And now the winds rose high and higher,

Strange sounds are heard along the wall,
Dim faces glimmer through the gloom,
And still mysterious voices call,
And shadows flit from room to room :

Till, bending o'er the dying brands,
She chanced a sudden gleam to see ;

She turned the sparkling embers o'er,
And lo ! she finds a golden key !

Lured on, as by an unseen hand,
She roamed the castle o'er and o'er,—
Through many a darkling chamber sped,
And many a dusky corridor :

And still, through unknown, winding ways
She wandered on for many an hour,
For gallery still to gallery leads,
And tower succeeds to tower.

Oft, wearied with the steep ascent,
She lingered on her lonely way,
And paused beside the pictured walls,
Their countless wonders to survey.

At length, upon a narrow stair
That wound within a turret high,
She saw a little low-browed door,
And turned, her golden key to try ;

Slowly, beneath her trembling hand,
The bolts recede, and, backward flung,
With harsh recoil and sullen clang,
The door upon its hinges swung.

There, in a little moonlit room,
She sees a weird and withered crone,
Who sat and spun amid the gloom,
And turned her wheel with drowsy drone.

With mute amaze and wondering awe,
A passing moment stood the maid,
Then, entering at the narrow door,
More near the mystic task surveyed.

She saw her twine the flaxen fleece,
She saw her draw the flaxen thread,
She viewed the spindle's shining point,
And, pleased, the novel task surveyed.

A sudden longing seized her breast
To twine the fleece,—to turn the wheel:
She stretched her lily hand, and pierced
Her finger with the shining steel!

Slowly her heavy eyelids close,
She feels a drowsy torpor creep
From limb to limb, till every sense
Is locked in an enchanted sleep.

A dreamless slumber, deep as night,
In deathly trance her senses locked.

At once, through all its massive vaults
And gloomy towers, the castle rocked.

The beldame roused her from her lair,
And raised on high a mournful wail, —
A shrilly scream that seemed to float
A requiem on the dying gale.

“A hundred years shall pass,” she said,
“Ere those blue eyes behold the morn, —
Ere these deserted halls and towers
Shall echo to a bugle-horn ;

“A hundred Norland winters pass,
While drenching rains and drifting snows
Shall beat against the castle walls,
Nor wake thee from thy long repose.

“A hundred times the golden grain
Shall wave beneath the harvest moon,
Twelve hundred moons shall wax and wane
Ere yet thine eyes behold the sun !”

She ceased ; but still the mystic rhyme
The long-resounding aisles prolong,
And all the castle’s echoes chime
In answering cadence to her song.

She bore the maiden to her bower,
An ancient chamber, wide and low,
Where golden sconces from the wall
A faint and trembling lustre throw ;

A silent chamber, far apart,
Where strange and antique arras hung,
That waved along the moldering walls,
And in the gusty night-wind swung.

She laid her on her ivory bed,
And gently smoothed each snowy limb,
Then drew the curtain's dusky fold
To make the entering daylight dim.

PART II.

And all around, on every side,
Throughout the castle's precincts wide,
In every bower and hall,
All slept : the warder in the court,
The figures on the arras wrought,
The steed within his stall.

No more the watch-dog bayed the moon,
The owlet ceased her boding tune,
 The raven on his tower,
All, hushed in slumber still and deep,
Enthralled in an enchanted sleep,
 Await the appointed hour.

A pathless forest, wild and wide,
Engirt the castle's inland side,
 And stretched for many a mile ;
So thick the deep, impervious screen,
Its topmost towers were dimly seen
 Above the moldering pile.

So high the ancient cedars sprung,
So far aloft their branches flung,
 So close the covert grew,
No foot its silence could invade,
No eye could pierce its depths of shade,
 Or see the welkin through.

Yet oft, as from some distant mound,
The traveler cast his eyes around
 O'er wold and woodland gray,
He saw, as by the glimmering light
Of moonbeams, on a misty night,
 A castle far away.

All desolate and drear it stood
Within the wild and tangled wood,
'Mid gloomy foss and fell ;
And oft the maiden's form did seem
To mingle with a champion's dream,
As Gothic legends tell.

Long ere the hundred years had passed,
Brave knights, with vigil and with fast,
 Essayed to break the thrall ;
Till, in the old romantic time
Of minstrel and Provençal rhyme,
 And *Amadis de Gaul*,

A paladin from holy land,
With helm and hauberk, spear and brand,
 And high, untarnished crest,
By visions of enchantment led,
Hath vowed the magic maze to tread,
 And break her charmèd rest.

As in the Valley of St. John,
The bold de Vaux defied alone
 The mighty elfin powers,
And sought to gain the enchanted mound,
And break the spell that darkly bound
 Its battlements and towers,—

So, like that knight of Triermain,
He came through Saracenic Spain
 O'er deserts waste and wide ;
No dangers daunt, no toils can tire ;
With throbbing heart and soul on fire
 He seeks his sleeping bride.

He gains the old, enchanted wood,
Where never mortal footsteps trod,
 He pierced its tangled gloom ;
A chillness loads the lurid air,
Where baleful swamp-fires gleam and glare
 His pathway to illume.

Well might the warrior's courage fail,
Well might his lofty spirit quail,
 On that enchanted ground ;
No open foeman meets him there,
But, borne upon the murky air,
 Strange horror broods around !

At every turn his footsteps sank
'Mid tangled boughs and mosses dank,
 For long and weary hours, —
Till issuing from the dangerous wood,
The castle full before him stood,
 With all its flanking towers !

The moon a paly lustre sheds ;
Resolved, the grass-grown court he treads ;
 The gloomy portal gained,
He crossed the threshold's magic bound,
He paced the hall, where all around
 A deathly silence reigned.

No fears his venturous course could stay,—
Darkling he groped his dreary way,—
 Up the wide staircase sprang :
It echoed to his mailèd heel ;
With clang of arms and clash of steel
 The silent chambers rang.

He sees a glimmering taper gleam
Far off, with faint and trembling beam,
 Athwart the midnight gloom :
Then first his soul confessed a fear,
As with slow footsteps drawing near,
 He gained the lighted room.

And now the waning moon was low,
The perfumed tapers faintly glow,
 And, by their dying gleam,
He raised the curtain's dusky fold,
And lo ! his charmèd eyes behold
 The lady of his dream !

As violets peep from wintry snows,
Slowly her heavy lids unclose,
And gently heaves her breast ;
But all unconscious was her gaze,
Her eye with listless languor strays
From brand to plumy crest :

A rising blush begins to dawn
Like that which steals at early morn
Across the eastern sky ;
And slowly, as the morning broke,
The maiden from her trance awoke
Beneath his ardent eye !

As the first kindling sunbeams threw
Their level light athwart the dew,
And tipped the hills with flame,
The silent forest-boughs were stirred
With music, as from bee and bird
A mingling murmur came.

From out its depths of tangled gloom
There came a breath of dewy bloom.
And, from the valleys dim,
A cloud of fragrant incense stole,
As if each violet breathed its soul
Into that floral hymn.

Loud neighed the steed within his stall,
The cock crowed on the castle wall,
 The warder wound his horn ;
The linnet sang in leafy bower,
The swallows, twittering from the tower,
 Salute the rosy morn.

But fresher than the rosy morn,
And blither than the bugle-horn,
 The maiden's heart doth prove,
Who, as her beaming eyes awake,
Beholds a double morning break,—
 The dawn of light and love !

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